

THE JOURNAL  
OF FUN  
AND GAMES

# GAMES

INTERNATIONAL

November

No.10

£1.95

US \$4.50

## IN THIS ISSUE:

**OIL  
IMPERIUM**  
Yuppie scum  
must burn

**WABBITS**  
A wadiation  
wiot

**SCOTLAND  
YARD**  
A new look for  
the old Bill

**TRUMP**  
The game of  
the name



# PLUS

Generic wargames under the gun; Acquire variants; Consumer guide:  
In review — 1853; World in Flames; Light Division; Tomorrow the World.



# Small, but Perfect.



3 great new collectable games from Perfect Games.

Available from W.H. Smiths, Virgin, Harrods, Homeleys and all good games stores.



# GET INTO A BIND



With our new luxury Cordex binder.  
Price £6.50 inc P&P (foreign orders: add £2)  
Cheques & POs to:

GAMES INTERNATIONAL, Lamerton House, 23a High St, Ealing, London W5 5DF  
Or phone our Credit Card Hotline: 01-579 2612



# UPFRONT

## FAMILY LIFE

Just as Goebbels reached for his gun when he heard the word 'culture', I reach for mine when I hear the word 'family'. Not that there is anything intrinsically wrong with this ancient institution. Far from it. Why then, has it come to represent all that is moronic and banal in society? Think family restaurant, family programme, family newspaper, and more pertinently, family game.

Family as a euphemism for stupid. Certainly if you had any respect for the health of your kith and kin, an (English) family restaurant is the last place you would take them for a meal. Unless you wanted salmonella with your chips, that is. Switch on a 'family programme' on TV and you may as well put your brain on hold. Until a few years ago the term 'family game' had a certain respectability. Unfortunately it has been hijacked by a succession of get-rich-quick merchants and used to disguise a lack of talent stunning in its totality (ironically the last millionaire making game - *Trivial Pursuit* - was not marketed at the family at all).

The latest missive to use the family for its own ends emanates from a market survey commissioned by a leading games company. From this we learn that the family is 'stronger than ever'. And that, as a result of this, the family game is selling like never before because more and more parents are buying games. The latter is true in the most ironic sense. The fact is, the divorce rate is higher than ever, so now the kids in the middle get a game from *both* parents. But of course this doesn't make such good PR.

What was especially noticeable at the recent Essen Games Fair was the way German parents interact with their children, and the way that games are used as a catalyst to this end. The games boom in Germany is regarded as a counter attack to the prevalent British and American attitude that children should watch (TV) and not be heard - the couch potato mentality. The almost total lack of success of shoot 'em up computer games in Germany is a further indication of the contempt in which such anti-social, and passive, products are held.

But in the UK and America (whose social trends we seem to be sadly following), the family is used as such a dumping ground for products pandering to the lowest common denominator. Why? Surely people

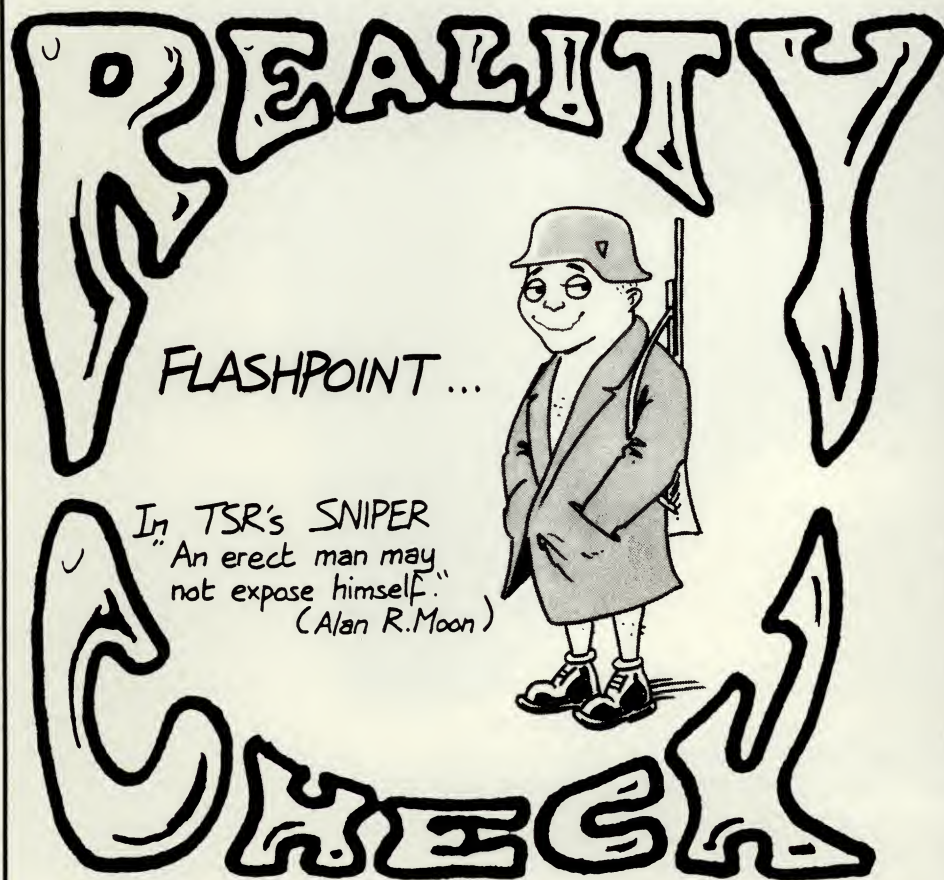
who read the *Guardian*, or the *Independent* are not *all* bastards? No doubt they were part of a family at some point in their lives. And surely they're not all single parents now? If they do have families you can bet your life that they would opt for the life of a nineteenth century pit-pony rather than watch *Neighbours*, let alone play the game. And what about our millions of readers? Don't they deserve something other than TV spin-offs? I should co-co. The best hope looks to be the great merger of 1992 when, theoretically, the European Market becomes one (yes, I thought it was 'one' already, but let's not digress any more).

## QUALITY STRASSE

Next year two major German companies are to launch their products in the UK year. *Wilkommen*, for quality, rather than tat, seems to have the upper hand in continental Europe as a look down any French or German high street will quickly confirm. But what does this mean in terms of games? Are we going to be flooded with quality German products? At best, it's doubtful, primarily because of the difficulties of distribution, and also because of the retail problems caused by the big chain stores holding sway (again the American lesson of more meaning less). On the plus side we will be offering more and more quality imports via mail order to compensate for the lack of good domestic product.

The bigger companies like Ravensburger already have their own distribution networks in place so are well equipped to compete. Whether this will inspire British companies to improve their product quality remains to be seen, though we certainly hope so.

Meanwhile, pass me the .45.



## WRITING FOR GI

In our quest for the best we're interested in a number of subjects. If you can provide variants or strategy articles for popular games, or features on certain areas of general interest, then we'd be interested in hearing from you.

For the rolegame section, we'd be keen to see good short scenarios or articles on novel approaches to games.

Send your submissions to at the editorial address (on disk if possible - give us a call to check on formats).



# GA ME S

INTERNATIONAL  
THE JOURNAL  
OF FUN  
AND GAMES

ISSN 0955-4424

Editor: *Brian Walker*Production Editor: *Paul Mason*Illustrators: *Ralf Kahlert, Lee Brimmicombe-Wood*

Contributors: *Mike Siggins, Alan R Moon, Martin Croft, Norman Smith, Dave Berry, George Crawshaw, Ellis Simpson, Mike Jarvis, Kevin Warne, Andrew Daghish, Mark Green, Derek Carver, John Humphries, John Inglis, Ernesto Williams, Jamie Thomson, Steve Jones, Mark Humphries, Dave Morris, Marvus L Rowland*

Cover: *Oil Imperium* by *Rainbow Arts*

Printer: *Worcestershire Web Offset Ltd, Berry Hill Ind Est, Droitwich, Worcs WR9 9BL*

Distributor: *Diamond Distribution*

0424 430422

*Games International, Lamerton House, 23a High St, Ealing, London W5 5DF.*

01-567 7740

Fax: 01-579 6485

*Games International* is published monthly by *Foxray Ltd*. Reg No 2270529. Vat No 495 4478 93

UK subscriptions – £15 for 12 issues. European subscriptions – £18 for 12 issues. US subscriptions – £22 for 12 issues. Write to the above address or fill in the form on page 58.

© Copyright here and abroad of all editorial content is held by the publishers *Foxray Ltd*, except where otherwise indicated. Reproduction in whole or part is forbidden save with the express permission in writing of the publishers.

## CONTENTS

### GENERAL GAMES

#### 7 REVIEWS

1853, Cluequest, Counter Intelligence, Hookipa, Trump and ASG Baseball.

#### 14 CONSUMER GUIDE

An A to Z listing of games to consider for the season of goodwill and gaming.

#### 18 THE GAMES CLINIC

Variants for *Scotland Yard* (translated by *Mark Humphries*), *Acquire* (by *Alan R Moon, George Crawshaw* and *Derek Carver*), *Broadway* (by *Brian Walker*), and *Organized Crime* (by *Derek Carver*).

#### 25 GI AWARDS

Vote for your favourite game.

### WARGAMES

#### 28 REVIEWS

Including *World In Flames*, *Tomorrow the World*, and *Hitler's Last Gamble*.

#### 35 A QUESTION OF INITIATIVE

*Dave Berry* discusses the way *World in Flames* solves a design problem.

#### 36 CONVENTION REPORT

*Andrew Daghish* was in Italy for *Padcon 89*.

### ROLEGAMES

#### 37 REVIEWS

*Creatures of the Dreamlands*, *Dungeoneer* and *Teenagers from Outer Space*.

#### 39 CITIES FEATURE, PART 2

Reviews of cardboard city products, and a scenario by *Paul Mason*.

#### 41 NUKE THE WABBITS

*Marcus L Rowland* explains how to take one scenario for a classic obscure game (*Bunnies & Burrows*) and apply it to every rolegame you can think of.

### COMPUTER GAMES

#### 46 REVIEWS

Including *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, *Oil Imperium* and *Fire Brigade*

#### 53 THAT NOBLE GAME

*Dave Morris* surveys the field of generic wargames for the computer, with special emphasis on the Ancient period.

### REGULARS

16 R.I.P  
Energie Poker.

17 SCRABBLE  
TEASER

22 DESERT ISLAND  
GAMES  
This month – *Paul Mason*.

24 SNIPER  
International gaming gossip

26 NEWS

45 ROLE CALL  
Rolegame odds and ends.

55 REBOUND  
The readers write.

57 CLASSIFIEDS  
Free listing of clubs, conventions and small ads.



**ISSUE TEN**

Many of you were probably wondering what had happened to our American correspondent Alan R Moon. But then again, maybe not. The truth is, Alan has been moving house from Massachusetts to the wilds of New Hampshire. While not approaching the scale of a Boer trek, this becomes a long haul when you have to move 2000 games one by one.

Now that all the boxes are sitting comfortably, Alan resumes normal service with an excellent **Acquire** variant. For the future, Alan is preparing a feature on railroad games and to make this as comprehensive as possible, we need your help, or rather that of our German speaking readers. In our classified section you will see a list of translations Alan is seeking. Unfortunately, we are unable to offer any reward other than the satisfaction of having played a part in what promises to be a major series.

Elsewhere **Trump** is the name of the month in more ways than one; it was the failure of his bid for United Airlines that precipitated the recent mini-crash on Wall Street. The game, though, should send MB shares rocketing.

Quite a month for Americans in *GI*; for the **Scotland Yard** variants we have to thank the California-based Mark Humphries who translated them for us from *Jeux et Strategie*. If there was ever a competition for the longest playable game, then **World in Flames** would be in there pitching. This monster, now in its fourth edition, makes **Third Reich** seem like a game of **Pass the Pigs**. For those, unlike 'Iron' Mike Siggins, who have less than half a decade to spare, the game offers a number of shorter scenarios as the Man of Iron makes clear in his very thorough review.

Lee-Brimmicombe Wood assesses the 'what if' (America decided to destroy the world) game **Light Division**, and concludes that Rambo isn't as big a poof as we thought. It's close, though. Lots of variety in the computer games section; Dave Morris takes a look at generic war-games, while Kevin 'JR' Warne seeks black gold in **Oil Imperium**. **Curse of the Azure** bonds gets the thumbs up from Jamie Thompson as does **Red Lightning** from John Inglis. Taking a break from fighting fantasy (or is he?), Ernesto Williams turns on the telly to check out **TV Sports Football** - American style, (that's the game where the players get to wear

**Star Ratings**

\*\*\*\*\*

Top class game. Highly recommended

\*\*\*\*

Very good game. Worth buying

\*\*\*

Worth a look

\*\*

Only if the subject interests you



A true turkey

those cute pyjamas, and the referee looks like a zebra who's just majored in semaphorics).

To round things off we asked a techno-no-vice, and former backgammon hustler, to assess the software version of this classic game. How lucky can you get? G

**ESDEVIUM GAMES**

LOW COST MAIL-ORDER SPECIALISTS -

Wide selection of boards, pieces & sets for CHESS, GO, SHOGI, MAH JONG, BACKGAMMON, CITADEL, GRENADIER + PRINCE AUGUST  
Fantasy and Science Fiction miniatures

**Fantasy Games**

Arkham Horror (Ch) £16.95  
Blood Bowl (GW) New Edn  
Starplayers £10.99  
Dungeon Bowl £13.99  
Chaos Marauders (GW) £10.95  
Curse of the Mummy's Tomb (GW) £15.99  
Dark Cults £6.95  
Dungeon! (TSR) £12.95  
Dungeon Quest (Drak Borgen) (GW) £15.99  
Heroes for DungeonQuest £10.50  
DungeonQuest Catacombs £7.50  
Warlock of Firetop Mountain £15.99  
Sorcerer King (Wot) £15.95  
Kings and Things (WEG) £15.95  
Dark Emperor (AH) £16.95  
Warrior Knights (GW) £17.95  
Adventurer (Yaq) £6.95  
Barbarian Kings (SP1) £7.95  
Battle of the Halj (FG) £15.95  
Battle of the Five Armies (ICE) £9.95  
Bruce Lee Boardgame (IIE) £15.95  
Dark Blades (SGP) £11.95  
Deathmaze £4.95  
Dragonlance Boardgame (TSR) £25.95  
Dragon Riders of Pern (2nd Edn) £22.95  
Excalibur (Wot) £17.95  
King Arthur (Wot) £17.95  
Lionheart (Wot) £17.95  
Lonely Mountain (ICE) £8.95  
Merlwig's Maze (TSR) £6.45  
Nightmare on Elm Street (Vic) £22.95  
Night of the Ninja (IIE) £6.95  
Psychos & Slashers (FagH)  
1 Suburban Slaughter £5.50  
2 Kamp Killjoy £5.50  
Riddle of the Ring (ICE) £18.95  
Sorcerer's Cave (HPG) £10.95  
Mystic Wood (HPG) £10.95, Exp Kit £3.95  
Dragon Riders of Pern Boardgame £11.95  
Dragon Riders of Pern Action Bookgame £12.95

**Other Games**

Past Lives (AH) £32.95  
Pilgrimage £15.95  
Pirate Island (RG) £6.95  
Peninsular War (RG) £6.95  
Playboy Game (Vic) £21.95  
Quest for the Ideal Mate (AH) £14.95  
Talesin £12.50  
Shocks and Scares (HPG) £9.95  
Scotland Yard (Raven) £11.95  
Save the President £10.95  
Shakespeare (AH) £12.95  
Sirocco (TSR) £7.95  
Snakes and Ladders (3 Wish) £10.95  
Spies of the World (AH) £19.95  
SPIVS (3 Wish) £12.95  
Slick! (Oil Distribution Game) £7.95  
Stack (BB) £9.95  
The Steppe Game (TSR) £10.95  
Stocks and Bonds (AH) £13.95  
Stockmarket (Han) £19.95  
Suffering Spirits (3 Wish) £12.95  
Tactics II (AH) £9.95  
GI Western Rly Game (HPG) £10.95  
Sigma File (HPG) £10.95  
Taxi (HPG), Travel Go (HPG) £12.90 ea.  
Time, The Game (Han) £29.95  
Trivia Detective (Han) £10.99  
TV Wars (AH) £20.95  
Tycoon (AH) £17.95  
Voyage to Cipangu (Han) £15.95  
Web of Gold (3 Wish) £15.90  
Wembley (HPG) £12.95  
Pit £5.95, Uno £3.95  
Escape from Colditz (HPG) £12.90  
\* Hare and Tortoise (HPG) £14.90  
\* Railway Rivals (DGW) £7.95  
Extra Maps £2.50, Boards £4.50

These are just some of our games. Our catalogue contains details of virtually all games available in the U.K. Send 20p in stamps & 22p s.a.e. (overseas a.i.r.c.) for a copy (or free with orders over £6.00)

**MAIL ORDER CHARGES:** UK/BFPO/Under £14 - Add 60p. £14 and over - post free  
Eire & Overseas Surface Mail - Add 30% (Minimum £1.20). Europe Air Mail - Add 40% (minimum £1.40).  
Air mail elsewhere - add 55% minimum (£1.80) except AH, HPG, MB & HT games - add 100%

Payment in Sterling please Overseas payment by Bank Draft/UK Bank Cheques/  
International Giro/Access/Visa/Mastercard/Eurocard



You may phone orders and pay by ACCESS/VISA



● Come & see the BIGGEST & BEST Selection of Games, Rules & Accessories in the South

**Sports Games**

Baseball Strategy (AH) £17.50  
Basketball Strategy (AH) £13.95  
Classic Statis Pro Baseball (AH) £12.50  
Great Teams Statis Pro Baseball £17.95  
Football Strategy (AH) £13.50  
Hallway Golf (WEG) £27.95  
Paydirt (AH) £17.50  
1987 Teams £10.95  
Pro Golf (AH) £10.95  
Pro Tennis (AH) £12.95  
Regatta (AH) £17.50  
Sechs Tage Rennen (6-day Race) (VIP) £16.95  
Speed Circuit (AH) £18.95  
S-o-M Deluxe Baseball £26.95  
S-o-M Deluxe Basketball £22.95  
S-o-M Deluxe Football £26.95  
S-o-M Deluxe Hockey £25.95  
S-o-M Regular Baseball £14.95  
S-o-M Regular Basketball £14.95  
S-o-M Regular Football £12.95  
S-o-M Regular Hockey £14.95  
Statis Pro Baseball (AH) £29.95  
1987 Player Cards £10.95  
Statis Pro Basketball (AH) £22.50  
Statis Pro Football (AH) £29.95  
Player Cards £13.95  
Title Bout (AH) £17.95  
Win, Place & Show (AH) £13.50  
Wembley (SPG) £12.95

**Magazines**

Citadel Journal 2 £2.50  
Citadel Catalogue II £2.30  
Battletechnology (PRP) £3.50  
Breakout £2.70  
Counterattack (PRP) £6.75  
Different Worlds £2.60  
Games Monthly £1.35  
Games Review £1.40  
Games International £1.95  
G.M. £1.40  
Grenadier (PRP) £3.20  
Traveller's Journal £3.95  
Traveller's Digest £2.55  
11 - £4  
Challenge (GDW) £2.55  
Heroes (AH) £3.30  
General (AH) £3.60  
Miniature Wargames £1.25  
Wargames Illustrated £1.30  
Adventurer's Club (Hero) £1.95  
The Beholder 60p  
IDWGBI - The Box 70p  
Imazine 80p  
Pavic Tales £1.05  
J. Senseless Carn Soc 55p  
S.E.W.A.R.S. Games Gazette 80p  
Palantir 50p  
Sanity Claus 75p  
Utter Drivel 70p  
VIP of Gaming £2.90  
Sorcerer's Apprentice £3.05  
Star Drive Stardate £2.45  
Fire & Movement £4.00  
Early Strategy & Tactics. Ares £4.00 ea.  
Strategy & Tactics 111 on £8.95  
Wargamer (- game) £6.95  
Wargamer (Vol 2) £3.10 ea  
Wargames World £2.20  
White Wolf £2.20  
Autoduel Quarterly £2.05  
Trollcrusher 80p  
Wyrm's Claw 65p Warlock £1.00  
Punt & Pass, Dragon Lords 60p ea.

◆ **Special Offer**

- R** New Arrival
- \*** Role Playing Rules
- S** Plays Solo
- B** Boardgame
- M** Miniature Rules

**ESDEVIUM GAMES (01)**

185 Victoria Road  
ALDERSHOT Hants GU11 1JU  
Tel: 0252 311443  
or (evenings) 0252 722269



## REVIEWS

## GENERAL GAMES

1853

DESIGNED BY  
FRANCIS TRESHAMPUBLISHED BY  
HARTLAND TREFOIL

PRICE £39.50

\*\*\*½

Players of the railway game 1829 have been waiting years for Francis's near-mythical Indian railway game 1853 to be released commercially. Now, at long last, the game is available. The game's cover art depicts an undistinguished view of a North Western Railway locomotive dominating a rural Indian scene, and is overlaid by a caption stating 'A game for engineers who've had enough of the Financiers!' (By the end of this review, I hope to be able to state whether the game lives up to this sentiment.)

The game components consist of the usual things associated with Tresham railway games. The main departure from earlier games is that the playing board and the Stock Market comes, respectively, in seven pieces and two pieces which must be put together like a jigsaw puzzle. Unfortunately, this detracts from the physical quality of the game for two main reasons. First, some of the pieces do not fit together very well, and second, all the pieces suffer from curl problems and, as a consequence, the map is difficult to keep flat and can look unsightly. Despite this, the artwork associated with the map and the tiles is up to the usual high Hartland standard.

There is, however, one other drawback associated with some of the physical components: the cardstock used for both the box and the tiles seems to be on the thin side, and, as a consequence, feels flimsy. Given the price of the game, the purchaser should be able to expect sturdier components than those supplied. As far as looks go, the game does not really measure up.

So – the looks are not very impressive; but what is the product itself like? The game is intended to be played by three to six players; reading between the lines, the preamble to the rules seems to suggest that six would not be a good number. The optimum number for a game would probably be three or four. The game play follows the usual Hartland formula found in 1829 and 1830. Players start with money to invest in railway shares. The railway companies which they buy into then develop a network of railways linking the cities and towns on the board. Revenue is earned from the train services run by the companies, and depends on the size and number of towns linked by these services and the trains that are available. The earnings may then be paid out to the share-holders or retained to finance future developments; this decision can affect the price at which the company's shares are bought and sold on the Stock Market. The rule book covers all this fairly clearly, although I would advise a thorough reading before starting play or you will risk missing out on some critical rule.

For those familiar with 1829 and 1830, there are many differences in the 1853 rules which make it an entirely different game, and players will have to learn a whole new series of strategies to play it well. The main changes from its predecessors are as follows:

**1** Randomly allocated place cards at the start have been replaced by contract bids. Each player secretly writes down a list of between three and six cities which he or she hopes will be linked by railway; the value of the bid is equal to the value of the cities. Places are then decided in order of the highest to the lowest bids. Players then pay the value of their bid into the Bank, and they only get it back when all the cities in the bid have been linked! This is a clever mechanism, and vir-

tually eliminates the one element of chance found in 1829.

**2** There are two types of railway gauge available: broad and metric. To go with these gauges, there are two classes of trains. The broad gauge trains available are 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 trains, and the metric gauge trains available are 2M, 3M and 4M Trains. The metric gauge trains are cheaper than their corresponding broad gauge cousins. This will make for some interesting strategies, I'm sure.

**3** Share prices only go down when a company takes credits and there is at least one share of that company in the Bank Pool. This rule is revolutionary, and should introduce a competitive aspect to the player interactions.

**4** More terrain types exist on the map. River hexes have been subdivided into two types (river and multiple river), and mountain hexes have been subdivided into three types (hill, mountain, and Himalaya). Terrain costs depend upon the type of gauge laid down initially; metric gauge costs are cheaper.





**5** The number of towns and cities linked by individual train services are potentially higher than in 1829. A given service may consist of any number of small stations, and a number of large stations up to the train number. This will give an incentive to link up as many towns as possible, and should give rise to long, meandering routes. It should also give rise to more opportunities for route chopping.

**6** In addition to a maximum certificate limit for each player, there is a maximum share limit per company per player; no more 100% owned companies. This varies with the number of players, as does the number of shares required to float a company.

**7** The eight companies have restrictions on garrison placement to specific geographical areas. This does not appear to restrict the companies from running services outside these areas; they just won't be able to protect them!

**8** Steam packets have been replaced by the Government Mail as a source of Company Credit revenue. And every company gets a Mail contract. An additional source of Company Credit revenue is the existence of 13 frontier hexes on the Indian border. The company which first lays a tile in each of these hexes is paid between £40 and £200 in Company Credits for doing so. This could generate Gold Rush fever in some areas!

**9** The holder of the Elephant (first option to buy in the next share dealing round) has two new powers. The more powerful one gives him or her the option to demand that an extra operating round be played at the end of each set of operating rounds! The less powerful one allows him or her to sell the Elephant to another player for a mutually agreed price. Together, these powers should introduce some interesting tactics into the game.

It is difficult to assess the cumulative effect of all these changes without many playings of the game. Broadly speaking, their net effect is likely to be to encourage the building of long, continent-spanning routes, and to this extent, I would suggest that the sentiment on the box cover will be borne out: the game will be one for railway builders (engineers) rather than financial sharks. However, the designer may have undone all this by introducing an additional way of ending the game. In addition to an ending forced by the Bank running out, the game also ends when any share price reaches £400. I am suspicious of this rule since it may encourage the director of the East Indian Railway to build a cheap route, and declare every operating round. In this way, the game will end in 21 operating rounds, with the director of the EIR the most likely winner. The Government Mail should give the EIR enough income to ensure that it will always have at least one train. This cannot be right, and so I would suggest that players may have to play without this rule to avoid it becoming a farce.

There is one other problem with the rule book. Table three is printed twice; as well as appearing in the Data Tables section at the end of the rule book, it also appears in the main text on page 9. The problem is that they are not identical. Close examination, and a little logical thought, leads me to suggest that the version at the end of the rules is the correct one. Hopefully, this is the only error in the rules.

In conclusion, the game system looks good, and should play well. The game box suggests a playing time of four to seven hours, similar to that of 1830. My feeling is that its length is comparable to 1829, placing it at eight hours plus. Consequently, it is unlikely to appeal to the casual gamer. Despite the reservations expressed about the physical quality of the components, and the one or two questions about the rules, I would recommend it to railway games enthusiasts. On balance, the wait has probably been worth it; a pity about the rather high price though.

*Steve Jones*

3

£440



## STATIONMASTER'S NOTES

As one of those eagerly awaiting the arrival of 1853, I must confess to a sense of disappointment after our play session. To be fair though, the game lives up to its claims of being more suitable for engineers than financiers. The trouble is, engineering is not terribly exciting. The contract bidding which opens the game is an excellent innovation and can lead to much wheeler-dealing even before play proper has begun. It's also fun to try and work out the routes that were bid for (they're kept secret until completed) and attempt to foil the best laid plans.

The problems start in the middle game when most of the worthwhile shares have been grabbed. After this point it is simply a matter of deciding who is going to run the smaller companies. Because of the docile nature of the stock market (the share price of a company does not drop when a share is sold), and the restrictions on garrison placement, there is little one can do to affect a player in the lead. The resultant feeling was one of playing out time.

The game system's passive character is exacerbated by the emphasis it places on building; as there is no room for stock market manipulation, your turn consists purely of laying tiles and buying the odd engine. Inevitably, there will be players who treat the former segment like it was the World Chess Championship; spending forever looking for the optimum move. What this can lead to is an inordinate amount of 'down time'. Acceptable in a short session, but painful in a long game such as this.

I would agree with Steve's comments about the playing time. Our session took seven hours with five players. Even when one is fully conversant with the game, I can't see how you could shave more than an hour off. Certainly, the game is nothing if not realistic. But who'd have thought we'd be getting into 'playability versus realism' debate about a *railroad* game?

*Brian Walker*

## CHARTS

### General Games

- 1 Pass the Pigs (MB)
- 2 Yahtzee Deluxe (MB)
- 3 Scrabble (Spears)
- 4 Six Day Race (Holtman VIP)
- 5 Schoko & Co (Schmidt Spiele)
- 6 Enigma (Drummond Park)
- 7 HeroQuest (MB)
- 8 Monopoly (Waddingtons)
- 9 Consulting Detective (Sleuth)
- 10 Wildlife Adventure (Ravensburger)

*Chart supplied by Just Games.*



## COUNTER INTELLIGENCE

DESIGNED BY  
JERRY SECKER

PUBLISHED BY  
ZZOTA GAMES

PRICE £14.95



**Counter Intelligence** is really an expanded version of the old paper/scissors/stone game. In this game for two players, each acts as spy master in charge of three agents. The aim is to get your agents across town, via a network of safe houses, to penetrate Control Centre.

The main stylised board has two rows of buildings: one for each player. The rows of buildings have various safe houses marked in red, with the incidence of these decreasing the closer you get to control. Each turn, a player chooses one agent and tries to move up the rows towards Control. The other player has previously made a prediction of which agent will move and which of the two routes will be taken. If the prediction is correct, the agent takes two hits and fails to advance. If the prediction is wrong the agent moves two rows to a new safe house. Partial accuracy in prediction gives one row advance (wrong agent, right route) or single hit (right agent, wrong route). An agent dies after six hits.

The game has a nice symmetry as each player is alternately faced with trying to advance his own agents and trying to predict and hit enemy agents. On the face of it you are faced with a guessing game. But, like other superficially luck-dominated games (for example, Poker), there is a strong element of bluff and psychology in **Counter Intelligence**.

The physical components are very well designed, the main board and the two player 'Dossiers' in that heavy magnetic plastic. It is quite portable and has whiled away a few hours while waiting for trains to get the hang of their normal functions. However, my own feeling is that it could do with an extra level of activity to make it a really good game.

Mark R Green



## JUST GAMES

71 Brewer Street, Piccadilly Circus, London W1R 3FB  
Telephone: 01-437 0761 or 734 6124 Fax: 01-437 4541

### LONDON'S ORIGINAL GAMES SHOP

#### Some of our highly recommended games

Consulting Detective	£21.95	Supremacy	£19.95
Adventures by Gaslight	£11.95	Schoko & Co	£24.95
Elephantparade	£18.95	Tarqui	£19.95
Six Day Race	£17.95	City	£18.95
Ave Caesar	£24.95	Macstro	£14.95
Der Ausreisser	£ 6.95	Malawi	£17.95
Full Metal Planet	£32.95	Greyhounds	£17.95
Oppression	£29.95	New York	£ 7.95
Pole Position	£18.95	Ausbrecher	£ 9.95
Civilisation	£19.95	Kuhhandel	£ 9.95
Britannia	£14.95	1853	£39.95

And many more.

Send 9" x 9" SAE or 24p stamp for  
Free Catalogue and imports listing

MAIL ORDER SERVICE AVAILABLE

Phone or write for details



VISA



# GAME OF THE MONTH

## TRUMP – THE GAME

IN-HOUSE DESIGN

PUBLISHED BY  
MB (USA)

PRICE £29.99

\*\*\*\*

That's right folks! Not Trump the tower, not Trump the Yacht, not even Trump the intestinal emission, but **Trump** the game. And a fine game it is too. As the box blurb makes clear: 'It's not whether you win or lose, but whether you win' – a philosophy that has stood billionaire Donald Trump in good stead as he pursues his quest to have half the twentieth century named after him.

Not unnaturally, to win this game you need to acquire the most money. To do this you will also have to acquire the most enemies. The first step towards achieving this end comes when you are dealt five 'trump' cards and \$400 million in cash. On your turn you perform two actions: 1) Draw a card and 2) Roll the die and move around the board, or play a card out of your hand.

### TRUMP – THE EXISTENTIALIST

The board consists of various kinds of spaces, the most important of which are the eight property spaces. Onto these are placed what look like plastic coffins (property as a metaphor for decay?). If you land on such a space you place \$10m in the coffin. The other spaces force you to do various things like taking another



trump card or purchasing one of the properties.

As in real life it's not that simple, for you must auction the property. The game system handles this in quite a neat way: if you want to take part in an auction you must make some kind of opening bid. To bid, you grab a pile of cash, keeping the exact amount secret. The dealer then asks players to disclose their bids. The rest of the bidding sequence is open and continues clockwise from the highest bidder. However, you may only increase your bid if someone has played an 'outside investor' card. This card also enables a player to increase his bid by more than the statutory \$10m. A further bonus is that the money for this increased bid comes from the bank.

You can also knock somebody out of the bidding by playing a 'You're out of the bidding' card, whereupon they can only continue in the auction by playing an 'I'm back in the bidding' card. If you own the property put up for auction, you get the cash bid.

If you buy a property you have to reveal the amount of cash currently in the coffin, though subsequently you may take peeks as long as the property remains in your possession. Bids must be carefully measured in the auctions. The value of the property concerned is based on two things; the amount of cash currently in the coffin (a good memory is helpful here); the cards you hold for that property which could prove valuable in phase two – the dealing phase, which is arrived at when the deck of Trump cards is exhausted.

### TRUMP – THE ICON

You have three choices of play in this phase; play a card, which could help you reap profits on property owned; make a deal; or pass. The game ends when all players have passed. At this point you are able to get your mitts on the cash in any property coffins you may own. It is really in the deal making segment where the game is won and lost. The trick here is to remember who is in the lead and then try to squeeze the best possible deal out of him, or simply not deal with him at all.

The dealing itself is pretty open-ended and might not appeal to players who like to have the game system do everything for them. The rule book helps players who wouldn't know a deal from a dildo with five examples of possible pacts, and indeed serves as an exemplary guide throughout. The production and component quality is absolutely first class and of a standard not normally associated with American family games. Certainly **Trump** is a must for anyone who likes interactive business games and crushing opponents. Playing time is about 90 minutes and the rules (and the components) suggest three to four players. If you're feeling a bit Trumpish you could buy two sets, put them together, and play with more. My only qualm is the omnipresent Mr Trump whose mugshot adorns virtually everything connected with the game. It could have been worse, though. It could have been Robert Maxwell.

*Brian Walker*

*Available from Harrods, Selfridges and selected branches of Virgin.*



## HOOKIPA

DESIGNED BY  
RORY MACQUISTEN

PUBLISHED BY  
ACTIVE GAMES

PRICE £15.99

\*\*\*

This game takes us into the world of ports and starboards, tacks and gybes. Whether competing for the Americas Cup, sailing dinghies on the local reservoir or, as in this case, trying to manoeuvre a wind surf board, 'sailors' the world over have this strange language in common. It is vital to learn some of it to comprehend the rules of this game.

### SURF'S UP

To save you consulting your dictionaries or gazetteers, Hookipa is a bay on Maui, one of the Hawaiian islands. More of that later.

There are in fact two games, one on each side of the board. The first, or Original,

game consists of racing miniature sailboards around marker buoys printed on the board. Each player receives four boardspeed points at the beginning of the game and depending upon the throw of the die, one point is added or subtracted from a minimum of two to a maximum of six. The boards are moved one space for each point available.

### WIPE OUT

Quite simple so far, however one must also obey the rules of racing, which include 'Starboard boards have the right of way at all times' and 'The windward boards must keep clear of the leeward boards at all times.' A prevailing wind is marked on the board and one must tack or zig-zag into it. Each time you tack or change direction you may take a wind card which will instruct you to move extra spaces, stay where you are, or fall off. If you foul or collide with another board, the aggrieved player may protest, which, if upheld, means that you miss a turn.

On the other side of the board is Hookipa Bay. Here the boards race round six buoys, jump waves and avoid rocks. Movement is controlled by throwing one or two dice depending upon which part of

the board your sailboard occupies. When you hit a wave (marked on the board), take a jump card which could be advantageous or not.

Instead of boardspeed points, players start with five transition points, which can be gained or lost according to the jump and transition cards. The latter are taken when turning your board more than ninety degrees. These points represent wear and tear on the board so if you lose them all you are out of the race. An optional rule introduces a rogue shark which can attack the boards.

From two to 12 people can play the game, and the more boards racing at one time, the better the game. Both games have some interesting mechanics to make them as realistic as possible. However, the game is likely to appeal more to the *aficionados* of the sport rather than to your average landlubber.

John Humphries

**COUNTER INTELLIGENCE**

**The Psychological Game**

The international game of spy counters and counter spies

Phone Hitchin (0462) 459563  
NOW  
to order your game,  
quoting your Access/Visa number  
OR  
send your cheque for £17.50 to  
Zzota Games  
2 St. Mary's Lane, Hertford, SG14 2LD

Also available at  
Just Games, Hamleys  
and leading games shops

**£14.95**  
plus  
£2.55  
post and  
packing

Trade enquiries to Zzota Games

**ZZOTA games**



## ASG BASEBALL

DESIGNED BY  
GERRY KLUG

PUBLISHED BY  
3W

PRICE \$35

\*\*\*

In the days before *Pursue the Pennant* it is doubtful if one tabletop baseball game could be said to be the best without legitimate squeals of disapproval from the admirers of other games. All had their claims to fame. Now, while there is a certain snob value in hanging on to oldsters, most impartial players recognise PTP to be the best. Now along comes ASG Baseball. How does it measure up?

Designer Gerry Klug is a hardcore baseball nut (he's also a respected mainstream wargame designer) and this is certainly reflected in the game. The introduction to the rules makes a declaration of accuracy and complexity. In other words, the game

is realistic but takes some effort getting the full benefit from it. More than the minimum knowledge of baseball is required and the rules must be read, together with the examples, thoroughly.

### MANAGERIAL CHOICE

The game system works through a series of die rolls on a D20 which are cross referenced with stats on the player cards. For example; number 1 represents a batter at his best, and 6 at his worst, the D20 rolls are scaled accordingly. After selecting the appropriate column to read off, a further roll is made to produce the play result. The pitcher also has certain play results on his column to give accurate walks, strikeouts and so on, and an 'x' column is included to fine tune the possibilities statistically. The pitcher cards also include 'platoon pitching', 'clutch pitching', plus the pitcher's own batting information.

The cards generally are packed with information and detail. Players have ranges, double play abilities, error ratings and so on. The system uses even more detail on things like baserunning. Instead of operating on autopilot the runners have to be coached, giving you different play

possibilities and managerial choice without affecting solo playability too much.

Stealing (bases) is amply catered for, as is bunting, squeeze play, pitcher stamina and the usual paraphernalia. Special mention must be made too of the defensive options which include holding runners close in. Along with the error charts, the unusual plays, the optional rules, and the clever incorporation of the fielding game, the entire gamut of baseball possibilities comes to life. The game takes about 30 to 45 minutes to play once mastered, though rolling sets of coloured D20s will help speed things. Extra D10s are useful too for the range checks needed.

Like many baseball games there is much more work and research than a few pieces of paper can hold. The man hours involved in this project must have been enormous. The end result is a game that baseball fans and sports gamers will love. No ifs, or buts.

*Ellis Simpson*

Available from Balboa Games, 1507 Oregon Avenue Long Beach, CA 90813, USA.  
☎ 0101 213 437 5469.

## CLUEQUEST

DESIGNER UNKNOWN

PUBLISHED BY  
EDUFUN GAMES

PRICE £4.50

\*\*\*

When my review copy arrived I thought that somebody had sent me a rather elegant box of writing paper, for this is exactly what the packaged game looks like. The elegance continues inside with a good quality pack of lettered cards, score and note pads and six pencils all in the same claret colour. So – full marks for presentation.

Now for the game itself. Briefly, the three to six players are dealt a hand of nine cards from which they attempt to make a word. One player at a time lays his word face down on the table, at the same time giving a crossword style clue as to what the word is. Players can, on demand, have a letter revealed (clue setter's choice) but as their score will be determined by the unrevealed letters they would, of course, prefer to leave as many cards unrevealed as possible.

When a player thinks he know the word, he announces this and the other players are given 'a reasonable time (say 30 seconds)' also to come up with the answer. A wrong answer means you are eliminated from guessing that word. If your answer is correct you score points to the value of the unrevealed letters as stated above. The setter of the word scores points to the value of all of the letters in the word (revealed or not) plus a bonus equal to the player's score *if only one person gets it right*. He scores no bonus if more than one get the word right. The aim of this rule, of course, is to encourage players to set words that are neither too easy nor too difficult. The clue setter also incurs a penalty if nobody gets the word right (which could mean that his clue was too imprecise so he deserves to be penalised).

Play then moves to the next player, and so on.

### CROSS WORDS

For our test we purposely invited a couple of crossword freaks, the sort of people who finish the *Times* crossword while hanging on for directory enquiries (although that's no great achievement these days, come to think about it). But therein lies a problem. Although the game would, on the face of things, be aimed at crossword enthusiasts who instead of spending

their time solving clues now have a chance to set them, it is far from ideal if a couple of them are playing in a mixed party. They talk a different language from you and me – well, from me at any rate. One of them would solve the other's clue in a minute flat, while the next three minutes were spent explaining to my wife and me just how the answer fitted the clue! There was always just one clue solver when it was their turns and you can guess who was losing pretty badly. There just wasn't any contest given the single-solver bonus system.

To give the game a fairer trial we decided that clues should be limited to plain definitions. Although not so exciting for our two Brains of Britain, things went much better, with scores fluctuating each turn, which made for a considerably more enjoyable although, perhaps, less challenging game.

We all enjoyed the playtest well enough with one member keen to continue after the agreed number of rounds. I would give it a couple of stars but the player who was more enthusiastic than I would, I am sure, give it four. I'll compromise at three.

*Derek Carver*



## LAUNCH YOUR OWN BOARD GAME!

This comprehensive and unique service is offered by one of the UK's leading games manufacturers. We offer high quality games at a low cost, and also can provide a whole range of support services. YOUR game is supplied with the company name or designer label of your choice.

**INDIVIDUALS** - a chance to invent and market your own hit game  
**COMPANIES** - a sales promotion concept that not only advertises you, but sells itself too!  
**ASSOCIATIONS, CLUBS & CHARITIES** - an excellent means of communication amongst members, and between you and the world at large. A great idea for gifts and fund-raising.  
**EXISTING GAMES FIRMS** - at last (!) a cheap, single source supplier.

If you have an idea or theme for a game which you are interested to develop further, we can offer Playtesting and Marketing appraisals, give a free quote for Artwork and Manufacturing and can even assist with aspects of Invention and Design.

Other facilities available for very reasonable charges include Prototyping, Copyright and Trademark advice, Market research, Press and Publicity, Direct Sales, Packaging, Shrinkwrapping and Storage.

**MIX'N'MATCH PACKAGE DEALS** - Quorum GDS are able to keep prices low by standardisation of print sizes, which allow us to pass on bulk material purchasing benefits. By working with our format sizes, there is less re-tooling, and so production schedules are reduced and your game can be turned around more quickly. Furthermore, you are ensured that the game-board, box, and card sizes match, giving a coordinated presentation. Quorum GDS can produce games to specified custom sizes, and we can quote for any type or quantity of production.

**BOARDS** - sturdy centre-folding with coloured covering paper on reverse. Print area is 16 by 22 inches. Supplied with resealable polybag.

**BOXES** - consist of a lid, base, and base-platform with cut out for pieces. Made up size is 12 by 17.5 by 2 inches. Supplied as flats for you to assemble (or pre-assembled at extra cost).

**CARDS** - normally supplied as 32 or 64 cards per sheet. Perforated or cut, but left as sheets for ease of packaging.

The above items are itemised by quantity and number of colours on our price list, available on request. (Eg., single colour board at 1,000 quantity £0.90 per unit, single colour box at 500 volume is £1.00 per unit). Special effect covering papers, snakeskin, antique leather etc, metal colours and high-gloss varnish - POA.

**ARTWORK** for prototypes and production can be carried out in our art studios at reasonable cost. Our charges are calculated at £10 per hour plus materials. Quorum GDS employ graphics artists competent in a variety of styles, and we can also typeset and design instructions.

**PIECES** - where possible we will source standard pieces and dice for your game, to minimise cost. If custom patternmaking and casting is required, we may be able to assist. As well as plastics and resins, we also have experience of working in metal.

**WOODEN GAMES** - we are now pleased to have factory facilities for production of games boards etc. in wood. Our resident expert can also make wooden prototypes and one-off sets to order.

For further information and pricelists please phone or write enclosing an s.a.e. We welcome callers who make an appointment.

**QUORUM Game Development Services**  
 Unit 2, Harbour Road Industrial Estate,  
 Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 3LZ

Telephone (0502) 518625 FAX (0502) 501503 Evenings (0502) 514166

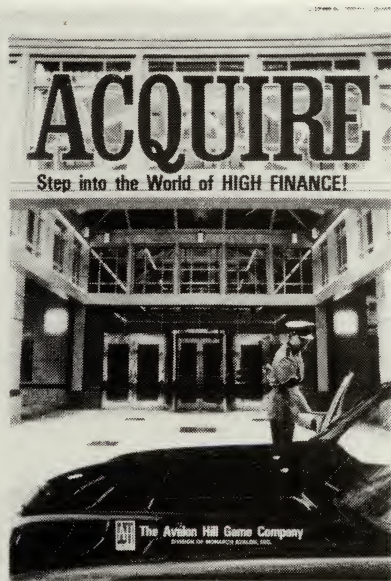


## CONSUMER GUIDE

# Consumer guide

*As Christmas looms once more, we present a whistle stop tour of what's worth a look and what's not.*

**Acquire** (Avalon Hill)  
 Maybe a little dry for family play, but a classic game nevertheless. Players attempt to build hotel chains and take over other chains for maximum profit. Best with 2-4 players though the game can accommodate six. £20.45. \*\*\*\*



**Britannia** (Gibsons/Avalon Hill)  
 Excellent game of the ancient invasions of this green and pleasant land. Unique system of birth control. The subject of a special feature in issue #5. Best with four players. £14.95. \*\*\*\*

**Broadway** (TSR)  
 Good old-fashioned family game in which players invest in musicals then attempt to present them on the Great White Way. 4-6 players. £14.95. \*\*\*\*

**Buck Rogers** (TSR)  
 First class Risk-in-space game with great components. Reviewed in issue #2. Best with five players. £19.95. \*\*\*\*

**Circus Imperium** (FASA)  
 Frenzied lions pulling chariots; whip-wielding drivers; chanting hooligans. Our kind of game. Two players upwards. Reviewed issue #5. £14.95. \*\*\*\*

**Consulting Detective** (Sleuth Publications)  
 Hard boiled and tough to crack. This is the game for brainy sleuths. Several expansion kits available. Any number of players from one upwards. £19.95. \*\*\*\*

**The New Dungeon Game** (TSR)  
 Not too dissimilar to the old Dungeon game. Light-hearted fantasy with good quality components. But where's the torture chamber? Reviewed in #8. 2-6 players. £12.95. \*\*\*\*

**Enchanted Forest** (Ravensburger)  
 Typically tricky memory game from Alex Randolph. German 'Game of the Year' in '82. Reviewed in #6. Best with four players. £7.99. \*\*\*\*

**Family Business** (Spielefreaks)  
 Unavailable for many years, this classic card game has just been republished in a splendid new edition. Reviewed in #3. Best with 4-6 players. £9.95. \*\*\*\*

**First Past the Post** (Waddingtons)  
 Daft but fun horse racing game in which the gee-gees can go backwards. Just like the ones you bet on last week, in fact. Reviewed in issue #5. Best with four players. £9.99. \*\*\*\*

**Grass** (Executive Games)  
 Excellent card game with dodgy theme of dope dealing. A minor classic. Best with 4-6 players. £8.95. \*\*\*\*

**Hare & Tortoise** (Gibsons)  
 Classic race game from David Parlett based on Aesop's fable. Winner of several international awards. 2-6 players. £12.95. \*\*\*\*



**HeroQuest** (MB)  
 Best looking game of the year from Milton Bradley. A fantasy affair which plays well too, especially if you use our variant in issue #9. 2-5 players. \*\*\*\*½





**Illuminati!** (Steve Jackson Games)  
Wacky card game in which groups such as the 'Bermuda Triangle' and the 'Gnomes of Zurich' attempt to control the world. Sophisticated, but if that's not your bag, what are you doing reading this magazine? 2-6 players, but best with four. £12.95. \*\*\*\*



**Jump the Queue** (Spears)  
Good family game with a fair amount of strategy if you ignore the joker face on the die. Reviewed #8. £6.99. \*\*\*\*½

**Kremlin** (Avalon Hill)  
Satirical game of purging and denunciation in the Soviet politburo. Lots of room for strategy and player interaction. Highly recommended. 4-6 players. Reviewed in #1. £17.95. \*\*\*\*

**Labyrinth** (Ravensburger)  
Nicely put together maze game. Primarily aimed at children, but challenging for adults too. 2-4 players. £9.95. \*\*\*\*

**Maxi Bourse** (TSR)  
Convuluted financial game mysteriously licensed from France. Nice components, but the market was never this slow moving. 2-6 players. £19.95. \*\*

**Mertwig's Maze** (TSR)  
One of the bargains of the year. A humorous, easy to learn, fantasy game for those who don't like fantasy games. Reviewed in issue #6. 2-6 players. \*\*\*\*½

**Nuclear War** (Flying Buffalo)  
Bad taste card game in which entire populations can be wiped out. There's even an expansion kit. 2-8 players, the more the merrier. £10.95. \*\*\*\*

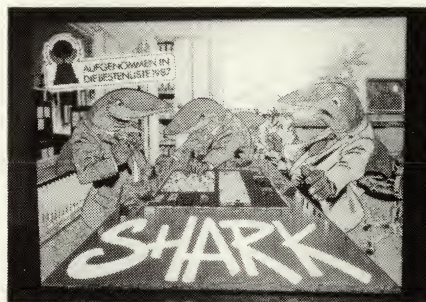
**Oppression** (Midson Holdings)  
The first apartheid simulation

game? Love it, hate it, you can't ignore it (at least not as long as they keep advertising). Great components, and shows signs of having been better thought out than most Monopoly clones. 2-6 players, best with 4-6. £29.99. \*\*\*\*

**Railway Rivals** (Rostherne Games)  
Classic railway game for all the family, available in a tube. Optimum number of players is dependent on the specific map. £6.95. \*\*\*\*

**Scotland Yard** (Ravensburger)  
One of the rare cases of cream rising to the top. Sales of this unique deduction game have now passed the million mark. Quite right too, for this is more than a fair cop. 2-6 players, good with any number. £12.99. \*\*\*\*

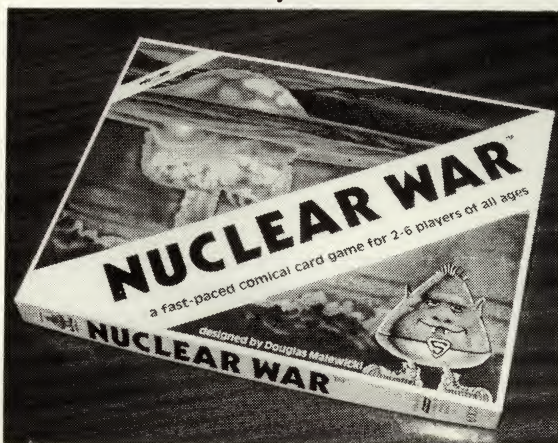
**Shark** (Flying Turtle)  
Semi-abstract stock market game from Belgium which provides a neat combina-



tion of luck and skill. 2-6 players, best with 4-6. £15.95. \*\*\*\*

**Space Hulk** (Games Workshop)  
Terrific looking game which uses the plot from *Aliens* as its theme. Upgraded one star since our original review in issue #8, as subsequent scenarios proved to be more balanced. Two players. £19.99. \*\*\*\*

**Speed Circuit** (Avalon Hill)  
On the piste with Prost; spin out with Senna; bugger it up like Berger. Whatever. It's in your hands in this motor



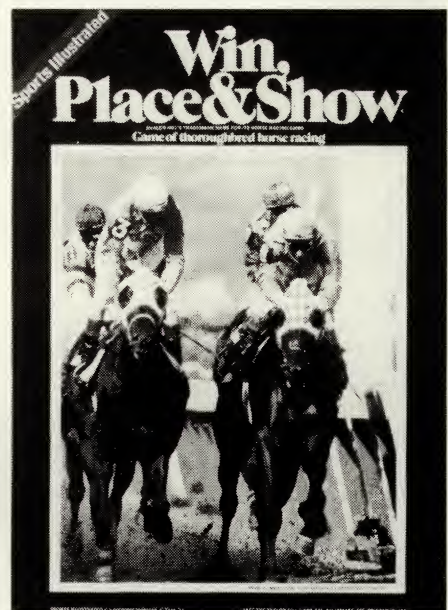
racing game of skill. 2-6 players, best with six. £16.95. \*\*\*\*



**Topple** (Waddingtons)  
A riotous combination of dexterity and luck. The ideal game after a tipple. Reviewed #8. 2-4 players. £8.99. \*\*\*\*

**Ubi** (San Serif)  
Ubi, rubi, cubi, shoo-be-doo-be-doo-be-doo. And that's just the rulebook! 2-4 players. £29.95. \*

**Wildlife Adventure** (Ravensburger)  
Outstanding game that really does appeal to all the family. Beautifully made with lots of strategy as players launch expeditions to locate exotic animals. Recently deleted, so grab it if you can. Highly recommended. 2-6 players. \*\*\*\*



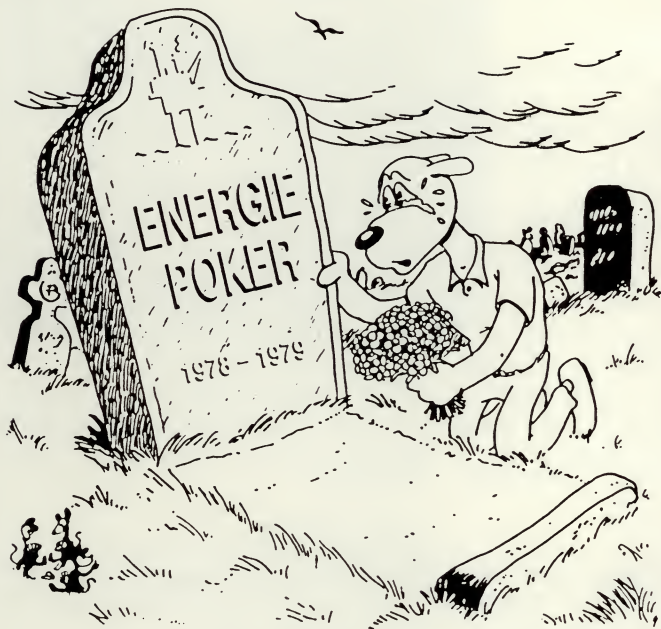
**Win, Place, and Show** (Avalon Hill)  
Buy 'em, bet on 'em, ride 'em. The only thing absent from this simulation is the dung. The best horse racing game ever. 2-6 players. £16.95. \*\*\*\*



R

I

P



## THE GAMBLE THAT FAILED

**Brian Walker**

**Energie Poker?** What kind of name is that for a game? A not terribly imaginative one, though it sums up exactly what the game is all about. The subject matter is energy. Clearly a game ahead of its time, which in this case was 1978. Even if you didn't know this you could hazard a guess from the amazing artwork on the board – a brightly coloured, almost kitsch, rendering of scenes from the exciting world of heavy industry.

The objective here is to make money by supplying energy from a mixture of five different sources.

Every year a different amount of each is available. The exact quantity is indicated on the board and then highlighted by placing a washer (that's right) over the relevant number. In 1980 for example, the unit mix (in a 4-player game) is: 13 oil, 5 gas, 2 nuclear, 7 coal, 1 solar, for a total of 28 units. Each player must try to obtain seven units each to fulfil his quota, while at the same time attempting to gain control of at least one of these sources by obtaining more than anybody else. The energy supplies are acquired by a clever bidding system: each player receives a folder which lists the five sources and

contains a 'pocket' for each. Into these pockets you place cards indicating how much you want of each source. The total bid must never exceed your overall requirement, and you may never increase your bid by more than three (an exception to this rule will be explained later). To try to ensure you get what you're after, you may accompany your bid with some cash (if, for example, you place \$1 in the gas pocket, you are saying that you will pay \$1 per unit bid if successful) but care must be taken here as money in the game is very tight. Prior to deciding the bid each player draws what can best be described as a 'prediction' card. This alters the amount of energy available in the given year. If you wish you may keep it until the year it applies to comes up, or you may simply return it. If you keep it you do not get another card until it has been used. This card is played before bids are revealed and energy supplies adjusted accordingly.

### THE GLASSHOUSE EFFECT

The precedence in bidding is as follows: 1) the player who bid the most money; 2) the player who bid for the most of that unit. A matching counter for each unit obtained is now placed in your control centre for that year. For each counter thus placed, you receive one 'energie dollar'. Unfortunately there's always one, sometimes two, who hasn't got it quite right and can't fulfil his quota.

However, because of the even mix (for example 28 units, 4 players = 7 per

player), there are bound to be some units left over. Unfortunately these now cost \$3 per unit. If you have been able to gain control of a source by acquiring a clear majority of units, then you collect the money instead of the bank if somebody chooses your supply to make up their deficit. Alternatively, you get your own source for free if you have the deficit. To maximise your position as controller you may deliberately try to create a surplus of your source by not bidding anything for it, thus forcing those in short supply to come to you, cap in hand. A cunning, though risky tactic, is to try a double bluff; bid a lot for the source you control reasoning that your opponents will be counting on you not bidding for it. Watch the look on their faces as they encounter their own personal energy crisis. This is an especially good move if you're ahead for if it succeeds it normally causes a bankruptcy, at which point the game ends.

The quotas rise each year, as do the units available.

### A NATURAL GAS

At the start of the game each player receives two 'energie change' cards which enable him to exceed the limit increase of three. However to do so costs \$1 per unit bid, plus any cash bid as well. Once used it's gone for good. Expensive, but it can be devastating if used correctly. The final action is the 'International Event' of which there are a possible twenty in the form of cards. One of these is turned up





each round and involve things like certain controllers, or the player with the highest deficit, getting money from the bank. Like all such random events, these can be included or not, though in fact they are quite fun to have in. The game lasts a maximum of ten turns, and the player with the most cash at the end of that time wins. The game system works well and produces a fair degree of excitement. Like all good games, the player determines his own fate, for the most part. If there is a problem, it is the familiar one of being able to do little to stop a player who has established a significant

lead. But this is a minor point in what is a very clever concept. Exactly why the game has ended up in this column is not too difficult to ascertain. The box gives no real clue as to the excellent product that lies within, while the cover art would look more suitable on a bottle of washing up liquid. And then, of course, there is the name. To the best of my knowledge the game's designer, Jurgen Herz, has no other credits to his name. More's the pity for in this one prematurely buried offering, he showed a rare talent. Jurgen: we owe you one. **GI**

# Die Macher

(The Fixers)

'Flawless'—Alan R Moon

'One of the best games ever made'—Brian Walker

'A masterpiece'—Derek Carver

Playing time: 4 hours

Die Macher is published in Germany by Mosquito Games, but is available with rules in English, price £25 + £3 P&P, from Games International, Lamerton House, 23a High Street, Ealing, London W5 5DF.





Access/Mastercard and VISA accepted. ☎ 01-579 2612

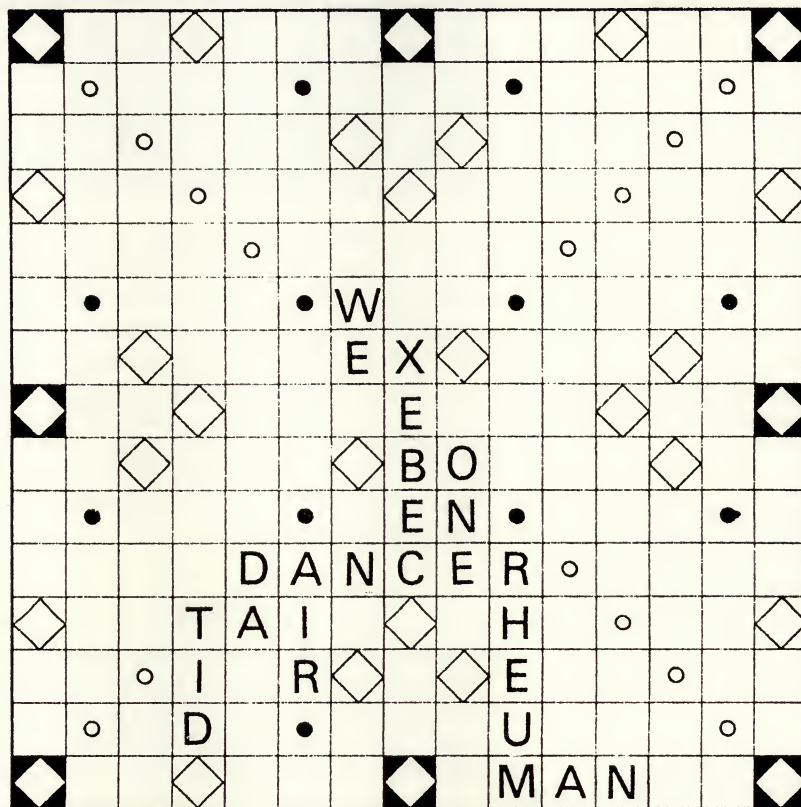
## SCRABBLE® TEASER

### TILE VALUES

A = 1	N = 1
B = 3	O = 1
C = 3	P = 3
D = 2	Q = 10
E = 1	R = 1
F = 4	S = 1
G = 2	T = 1
H = 4	U = 1
I = 1	V = 4
J = 8	W = 4
K = 5	X = 8
L = 1	Y = 4
M = 3	Z = 10

50 points bonus if all seven tiles are played.

-  = Triple Word Score
-  = Double Letter Score
-  = Triple Letter Score
-  = Double Word Score



What is the highest score obtainable on the Scrabble board diagram above with the rack:

**THYCLAS**

The sender of the winning entry will receive a copy of *OSW – Official Scrabble Words*, published by W & R Chambers.

Send your entries to: GI Scrabble Teaser, Games International, Lamerton House, 23a High St, Ealing, London W5 5DF.

Closing date for entries: 20th November.



**VARIANTS**

# The Games Clinic

## SCOTLAND YARD

*Variants for this classic game from Jeux et Strategie #42, translated by Mark Humphries.*

After frequent playings we found the game to be a tad unbalanced. To correct this we suggest the following amendments to the starting ticket supplies for Mr X:

Against three detectives: 1 black ticket, no double move tickets.

Against four detectives: 3 black tickets, 1 double move ticket.

Against five detectives: 5 black tickets, 2 double move tickets

.This set-up only applies to the regular game and not to any of the variants published below.

### CASING THE JOINT

Immediately before each appearance of Mr X, each detective takes a guess at which space Mr X will appear. Any detective making a correct guess gets a ticket of his choice.

### GRASS

After set-up, 'stoolies' are placed on the board by using a random card draw.

A pawn or some such piece can be used to designate a stoolie.

For three detectives, five stoolies

For four detectives, four stoolies

For five detectives, three stoolies

Anytime Mr X passes through, or ends his move on, a space where a stoolie is located, he must reveal himself.



Mr X gets a 'White Ticket' which can be used as a black ticket or to cross an entire city block. A block is defined as a sector/group of buildings surrounded by coloured routes. For example; stops 157,158,159,170, constitute a block. From 159 Mr X could move to any of the following: 157, 142, 128, 185, 187 in addition to 158, 170, 172, 186, 198. The white ticket cannot be used to cross the Thames except by ferry.

### PUBLIC ENEMY #1

Set-up is no longer random. Each detective sets up on the location of his choice. Mr X chooses a starting location which he reveals to the other players. He then proceeds to make his initial move.

### THE TERRORIST

Mr X gets as many bombs as there are detectives. Mr X can place a bomb when he makes a move by writing the letter 'B' next to his destination.

Later, when a detective enters a location with a bomb Mr X can blow him up by revealing the bomb notation. The victim starts off from Old Scotland Yard (132) on his next turn. The same location may be bombed more than once. Mr X cannot escape capture by blowing himself up.

The detectives have a helicopter at their disposal. Using the helicopter costs one black ticket (which Mr X receives). The detective places himself in the middle of a block (see above for definition of a block) to which he is adjacent. On his next turn he can move on to any location bordering that block. Only one detective can use the helicopter per game turn.

### FILTH UNITED

For three to four detectives. All detective pawns are considered to be of the same colour. Each detective can move the pawn of his choice during his turn. Mr X's ticket supply:

Against three detectives: 1 black ticket, 1 double move ticket.

Against four detectives: 3 black tickets, 2 double move tickets.

### BLAGGING

Each player gets to play Mr X once. At the game's start Mr X picks a random location card. This location is his first 'rendezvous point'. When Mr X gets there he has the choice of getting one point or going on to another rendezvous which would give him two more points (3 for the next, and so on). If Mr X gets



caught he gets no points whatsoever. The game can go on past the 22nd and 24th, by redistributing a supply of tickets to each detective. The winner is the player who scored the most points as Mr X.

### PASS THE PIGS

Each detective starts the game with only 2 underground tickets, 3 bus tickets and 4 taxi tickets. A ticket is valid as long as a detective remains on the same transportation route. Mr X gets all the other tickets but plays as usual.

### FANCY A DRINK?

For three to four players. Each detective player starts with two 'bobbies' (use a pawn to the extra one). The bobbies' starting locations are determined by random card draw.

Mr X can bribe bobbies and send them back to Old Scotland Yard (132), simply by landing on them. He must, of course, reveal himself to do so.

Mr X gets all the black tickets and 2 double move tickets against three

players, and all the black tickets and 1 double move ticket against two players.

Bobbies stationed at 132 can only leave there when another bobby enters that location.

Mr X wins if, after 24 turns, at least one bobby from each player is imprisoned. Any player whose two bobbies are free wins the game. Otherwise the game is a draw.

### 'ERE, YOU'RE NICKED

Mr X places himself on the board after the detectives have determined their starting positions. He therefore shows himself only on the first, eighth and 18th turns. After moving their pawns, the detectives can ask Mr X if he has passed the location they just left, and on which turn.

### FEEL THAT COLLAR

Starting positions are a free choice. Mr X shows himself only on the first turn. He doesn't reappear unless he's adjacent to a detective, at which point he must do so immediately. An adjacent location is the

closest by taxi, or if there's no taxi, by bus.

### VERBALLED

Mr X is invisible during the whole game. The detectives each can ask him a 'yes or no' question about Mr X's position before making their move.

If the answer is yes, the detective immediately moves. If the answer is no, the detective forfeits his turn.

A detective is never forced to ask a question. If he doesn't, he moves normally.

### ON THE LAM

Mr X can sabotage bus and underground routes by placing himself at a taxi station where the route to be sabotaged crosses. Mr X announces the sabotage and the route remains unusable for the rest of the game. He of course reveals his position by announcing a sabotage. **GI**

*Scotland Yard* is published by Ravensburger, price £12.99.

## ORGANIZED CRIME

*Some thoughts on last issue's variant by the godfather of games, Derek Carver.*

Issue #8 contained an old article from *Games & Puzzles* setting out a variant for **Organized Crime**. This variant, having been around for many years now, turned out to be somewhat like the curate's egg – good in parts.

Many groups restrict early home base attacks. My rule has always been that you can't attack a home base 'on tick'. You have to table the \$200 000 of your own money (not borrowed) first. This prevents these early attacks.

Lee Partis's rule of allowing power cards to be used defensively was a very bad one. In a lot of games combatants exhaust themselves, thus becoming prey to players outside the conflict. This makes for cautious playing and slows things down. In **Organized Crime** the winner of a battle (having used his own power cards) captures his opponent's cards. If

that opponent had used them up in defence, the victor would immediately be greatly weakened and would be discouraged from attacking a home base.

But the really good rule was one that the writer played down. That is that a win could be achieved by acquiring \$2 000 000. In the latter stages of the game when money is plentiful a player can always declare home base attacks in the hope that his die roll plus power cards will be sufficient to get from his base to his neighbour's. If he's unlucky, all that happens is that he loses \$200 000 and he tries again next time if he has plenty of men. But he is less willing continually to gamble on a lucky die-roll if he is likely to give his opponent a cash win.

Even more importantly, this rule a) often brings the game to an end without having to wait for the two remaining players slowly to slog things out, watched by two bored eliminated players, and b) forces a player into the action early as opposed to sitting on the sidelines all through the game, hoping to clean up at the end.

Finally, I would draw all players of this excellent game to a rule that is often overlooked. That is, that power cards can be purchased for \$200 000.

But, as the publishers confidently claim, this is a truly 'complete' game and as long

as you are willing to play a game where players get eliminated the rules do not desperately need improving: it's great as it is. **GI**

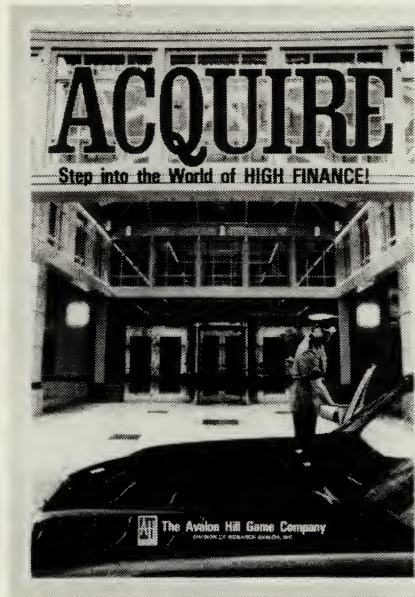
### TRANSLATIONS WANTED

With the growing number of foreign games being imported into this country it seems like a good idea to open a translations bank. Please send any translations you already have, especially French or German ones, to:

Mike Siggins,  
129 Ardmore Lane,  
Buckhurst Hill,  
Essex IG9 5SB.



# Acquire variants



## FAIR SHARES

**Alan R Moon**

Some people play *Acquire* with stock shares kept face up at all times, so that all players know how many shares of each chain each player holds. Others play the game with stock shares kept face down, and players must count on their fragile memories to remember who has how many shares of which chain. This variant can be used with either style of play but has been conceived for use mainly with the hidden share method.

### Set-up

You will need two copies of *Acquire* to play this variant. Take all the shares of stock from one game and add 15 shares of each chain from the second game, to make 40 shares of stock in each chain. Al-

ternatively, you could make up a substitute set of stock shares, using something like seven sets of forty coloured markers.

### Stock buying

Each turn, a player can buy four shares of stock (instead of three).

If a player buys shares in three or four different chains, he pays the normal cost but then receives a rebate of \$100 from the bank.

### Buying hotel tiles

From the start of the game up to the point of the first merger, a player may buy up to five extra hotel tiles, meaning he can have as many as 11 tiles all told. Each extra tile costs \$100. A player must announce how many tiles he is taking before he looks at any of the tiles that are drawn.

After the first merger, players may no longer buy tiles. Players with extra tiles cannot draw replacements until their hand is reduced to five tiles, at which time they can draw a sixth tile normally. (This rule gives players a choice of how to spend their money. A player can only buy stock as in the normal game, or try to draw the tile/s he needs to make that critical first merger favour his chances.)

### Majority stock holder bonuses

The three largest shareholders in a defunct hotel chain now each receive a bonus (instead of just the top two). In addition, the Information Card with the bonus figures is replaced with the Bonus Chart below. (Most times, the winner in a game of *Acquire* will be the player with the best overall stock portfolio, not just the player with the most stock in the largest hotel chain. Which is how the game

was intended to work. However, once in a while, one hotel simply overpowers all the other chains and the player with the most stock in this hotel is guaranteed victory. This rule, along with the added number of shares in each hotel, lessens the impact of such games somewhat, while reinforcing the need for players to have a strong overall portfolio. In this variant, it can be just as good to be the second or third largest stockholder in a lot of companies as the largest in one or two.)

### Optional game set-up

If there are two to four players, take tiles 1A, 12A, 1I and 12I and shuffle them. Each player then selects one tile. The player who draws 1A goes first. All tiles drawn are placed on the board. Any remaining tiles are put back in the pile.

If there are five or six players, use the same procedure but add tiles 1E and 12E to the initial selection.

### Optional rule

American is set up at the start of the game as tiles 6E and 7E.

No player may buy any shares of American until at least one other chain has more hotels than American. Hotels may be added to American at any time with the corresponding effect of requiring another chain to have even more hotels before the American stock is made available.

American can be involved in a merger even if the stock has not been made available. However, at the moment of such a merger, this rule is then ignored and the stock is immediately available, even as an option to players disposing of stock if American was the defunct chain. **GI**

## BONUS CHART

Tower	Luxor	American	Festival	Worldwide	Continental	Imperial	Stock Price	1st Bonus	2nd Bonus	3rd Bonus
2	2	-	-	-	-	-	\$200	\$2000	\$1500	\$1000
3	3	2	2	2	-	-	\$300	\$3000	\$2200	\$1500
4	4	3	3	3	2	2	\$400	\$4000	\$3000	\$2000
5	5	4	4	4	3	3	\$500	\$5000	\$3700	\$2500
6-10	6-10	5	5	5	4	4	\$600	\$6000	\$4500	\$3000
11-20	11-20	6-10	6-10	6-10	5	5	\$700	\$7000	\$5200	\$3500
21-30	21-30	11-20	11-20	11-20	6-10	6-10	\$800	\$8000	\$6000	\$4000
31-40	31-40	21-30	21-30	21-30	11-20	11-20	\$900	\$9000	\$6700	\$4500
41 & over	41 & over	31-40	31-40	31-40	21-30	21-30	\$1000	\$10 000	\$7500	\$5000
-	-	41 & over	41 & over	41 & over	31-40	31-40	\$1100	\$11 000	\$8200	\$5500
-	-	-	-	-	41 & over	41 & over	\$1200	\$12 000	\$9000	\$6009



# GRAND HOTEL

**George Crawshay**

Acquire is such a neatly constructed game that it seems almost impertinent to propose a variation. However, one simple and minor alteration which in no way changes the game mechanics has been found by our gaming group to improve the earlier stages.

This is merely the addition to the game of two further hotel chains, one at each end of the cost range, thus giving a total of nine chains with three in each category. To make these up, use a deck of cards using different suits to represent the new shares. For the new tiles, I suggest you use either a Scrabble set, or even Lego components.

This variant provides a greater degree of choice and, particularly, more scope for the creation of chains and execution of mergers, which tends to get the game moving faster at the beginning. G

## MOTEL

**Derek Carver**

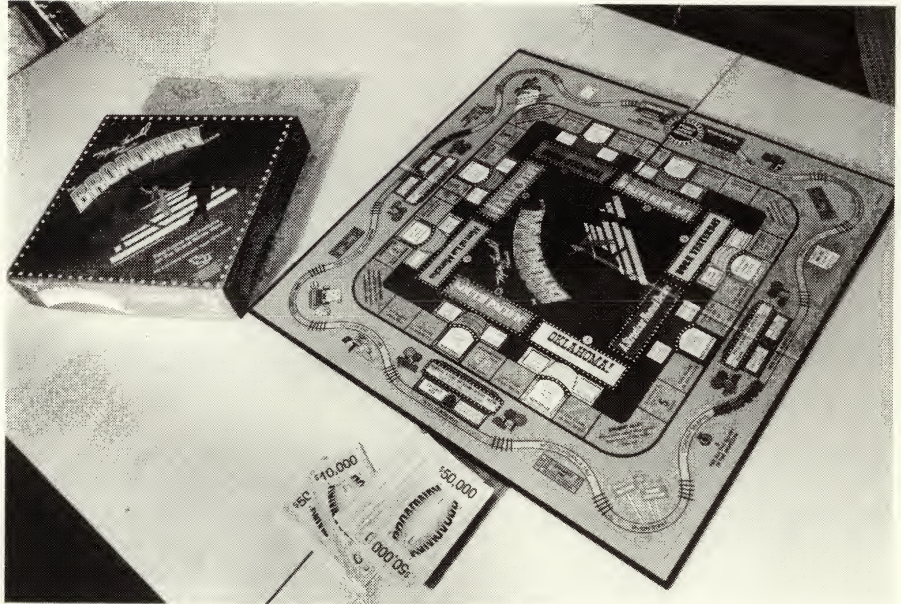
For a quick game play can be restricted to a nine by nine board (the tiles for the excluded spaces being rejected when they are drawn). The number of hotel chains should be limited to five. Each player starts with \$5000 and five tiles. A game should last approximately half an hour. G

## DEMOLITION

**Derek Carver**

When a chain reaches 26 tiles it is destroyed. The tiles are removed from the game and the shares lose their value. The game ends when all of the chains present on the board have at least 11 tiles or when there are no tiles left to draw. G

Acquire is published by the Avalon Hill Game Company, price £20.45.



## ON BROADWAY

**Brian Walker**

As anybody who has played it will tell you **Broadway** is a great fun game. The luck factor is huge, though for once this does not detract too much from the general merriment. Nevertheless, a little surgery to counter the whims of the dice could improve the game even more.

The First Act (as it is known) is fine as players whizz round the board trying to acquire shares. The Second Act, however, where your show goes 'out of town', can be rocky if lady luck has not hopped on your wagon. Even the trauma of hostile hicks in the sticks can be compensated for if you get a decent enough 'Broadway Advance'. If you don't, though, resign yourself to last place. To compensate for a poor roll in this phase I propose that you should be entitled to 'sympathy votes'. This works as follows:

Die roll	Votes
0	All shareholders in the poverty stricken production receive 1 vote per share.
1	Shareholders receive votes equal to half their shareholding in the show, rounded up.
2	Same as above, except round down.
3	Any shareholders with four or more shares in this show receive 1 vote.

If, and *only* in the event of an overcall, when the shareholder does not have sufficient funds to pay any fees due, the votes may be cashed in to cover the debt. The value of a vote is equal to the normal value of a share. Votes may not be sold in this way unless the player has no other funds.

In the true American way, the Academy Awards ceremony at the end of the game uses the winner take all principle. At the risk of contradicting the philosophy that in America there are 'no second acts', I suggest that there should be a prize for the runner up. And worse, something for third place too! Here's how this heretical concept works: abandon the die roll altogether. Instead each player secretly records his votes. This is done in 3 rounds – each player casting five votes per round. You may vote for more than one show. A score keeper should be appointed to keep a tally and collect the votes.

After the third round players may attempt to purchase remaining votes. When all negotiating has been completed a final round of voting takes place. After a winner has been determined prize money is distributed as follows:

1st Prize: \$500 000  
2nd Prize: \$250 000  
3rd Prize: \$100 000

The money is divided among the shareholders on the usual *pro rata* basis.

These variants may be used separately or in conjunction with one another.

Author! Author! G

**Broadway** is published by TSR, price £14.95.



## DESERT ISLAND GAMES

# Scraping the barrel

*Gorgeous, pouting  
anarcho-yuppie Paul Mason  
reveals all in castaway  
rolegamer plays some board  
games shock horror scandal.*

Typical. My first holiday abroad in years and the ship goes down. How extraordinary that the life raft on which I and a few other miserable wretches escaped the sinking channel ferry should have been washed into the Atlantic Ocean, finally to beach on a deserted paradise isle off the Gold Coast. Before we found this sanctuary I had already thrown overboard several of my fellow wretches who had the temerity to suggest that the raft would capsize if I didn't get rid of that huge tea-chest with the word 'GAMES' stencilled on the outside . . .

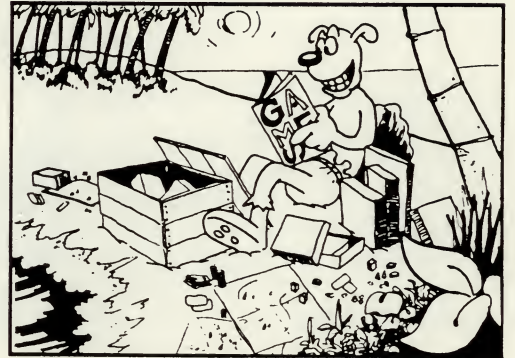
While my compatriots check out the island for fresh water, food, and the necessities of life as a castaway, I busy myself by emptying the tea-chest. Its contents don't always come in those convenient boxes that other castaways favour, and soon assorted sheets of paper are strewn across the beach beside me. Thus can you castaway-spotters distin-

guish the pie-tailed rolegamer from the grey-bearded board-gamer.

Nestling at the bottom of the chest is a treasure which I remove with particular care, as it is so appropriate to my current surroundings. **Pop-up Pirate** (Action GT) is not an obscure German game, it involves no skill, and it will never, ever be reviewed in *Games International*. However as an instructional aid in how to stick a sword into a barrel in such a way that the pirate pops up out of it (the secret is to be lucky), it must be the finest simulation of its kind.

## A PATHETIC EXCUSE

Beneath the papers there are a couple of boxes. I may be a rolegamer, but there are times when that crucial player just doesn't turn up and I have to improvise. On a desert island it might be difficult for players to plead the usual pitiful excuses ('I just met this fabulous woman!' 'I just met this fabulous man!' 'Oh, sorry, I didn't realise it was today' and '*Je suis non hablé, pardonnez mez . . .*') but apathy is the mother of invention. Hence **Cosmic Encounter** (Eon and, to a lesser extent, Games Workshop), which has

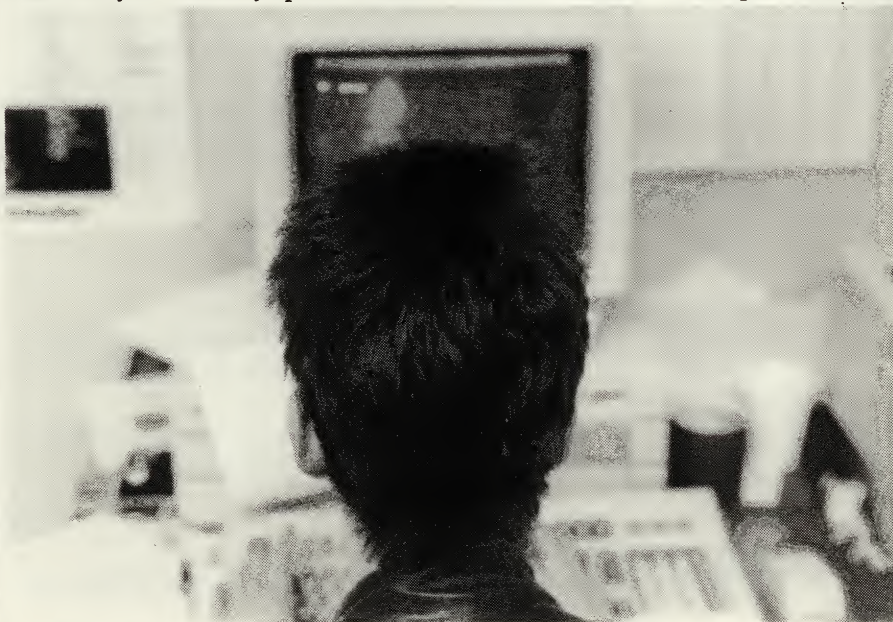


been sitting on my shelves for years without being played. It's about time I forced some people (at knife point, if necessary) to play it, and a desert island will be ideal. This is a classic example of a game simple enough for a brainless nerk such as myself to follow, yet with the spice provided by those rule-bending alien powers. **Suppenkasper** (Mattel Germany) has the same simplicity, and any game about eating till you burst is fine by me. We'll have to use my 'Mr Creosote's Wafer-thin Mint' variant, of course.

## BANANA MAÑANA

**Junta** (West End) is the perfect game to play on a desert island, since I'm already wearing the shades. Don't tell my fellow castaways, but I don't actually try to win this game, I just enjoy getting voted President of the Republica de los Bananas as much as possible. I tend to prefer games in which the rules aren't important, but in which the players have free rein to wheedle and deedle.

Once the boxes have been carefully stored in the shade, I turn my attention to the collection of papers, booklets and folders. Most of this is to do with the various rolegame campaigns I would expect to play in or run. I have a whole pile of *Tékumel* material, but would have to hope that one of the *Tékumel* scholars I know was around to fill in the gaps. *Tékumel* is without a doubt the best published rolegame setting. Recent shallow concoctions such as *Glorantha* and *Jorune* don't hold a candle to it, and even Tolkien's *Middle-earth* seems pedestrian



Paul Mason shows off his best side.



when compared to the exoticism and richness of Tsolyánu. I wouldn't be using the awful **Empire of the Petal Throne** (Different Worlds) rules, of course, but a custom designed set called **Tirikélu**, written by Dave Morris. I would, however, have copies of the two sourcebooks that Different Worlds have so far brought out.

### NI ZHEN MEILI

An even larger pile of papers concerns China. Here, immodesty strikes, as the game in question is **Liang Shan Po**, my own campaign based on the Sung dynasty legend of the Water Margin. The rules are simple enough that even I can remember them, but the appeal of this game, as with all good rolegames, lies not in the creation of the designer, but in the inventiveness and flair of the players. I would have to hope that Liang Cheng, Wang Shih and Chai Le had survived the perilous raft-trip intact, and still willing to fight for justice against corrupt magistrates and crafty bandits.

I pause for a moment to wonder why I brought **Chivalry & Sorcery** (FGU), that old workhorse of the late seventies, famed for its simulationist approach and ludicrously complex rules. Surely I would have been better off packing **Ars Magica**? Then I remember – it's not to play, but to practise writing reviews of (eight published and still counting . . .). Luckily, the box is sufficiently large that I can fit all the supplements I've got, with a little room left over for me to relent and bung in **Ars Magica** (Lion Rampant) after all. Although there's a lot about the game system I don't care for, this game meticulously builds up an authentic but magical medieval atmosphere. I used to love C&S for the richness and detail of its magic system, but now I feel it has been entirely superseded by **Ars Magica**.

### ONLY JOKING

I resisted the urge to bring **Paranoia**. One joke, endlessly regurgitated, can get a bit wearing, and I have no desire to be reminded of the computer. If I wanted a humorous game I'd bring **Ghostbusters** (West End). I've only played it a couple of times, but I found the rules the most amusing read of any game I've ever read. It also provides a perfect example of the kind of rules I admire most – a simple, no nonsense unified mechanism using six sided dice.

Ten games? Whoever said we had to take ten games? Well, I guess a Mah Jongg set will bump me up to ten. Even though it was probably invented by a Canadian in

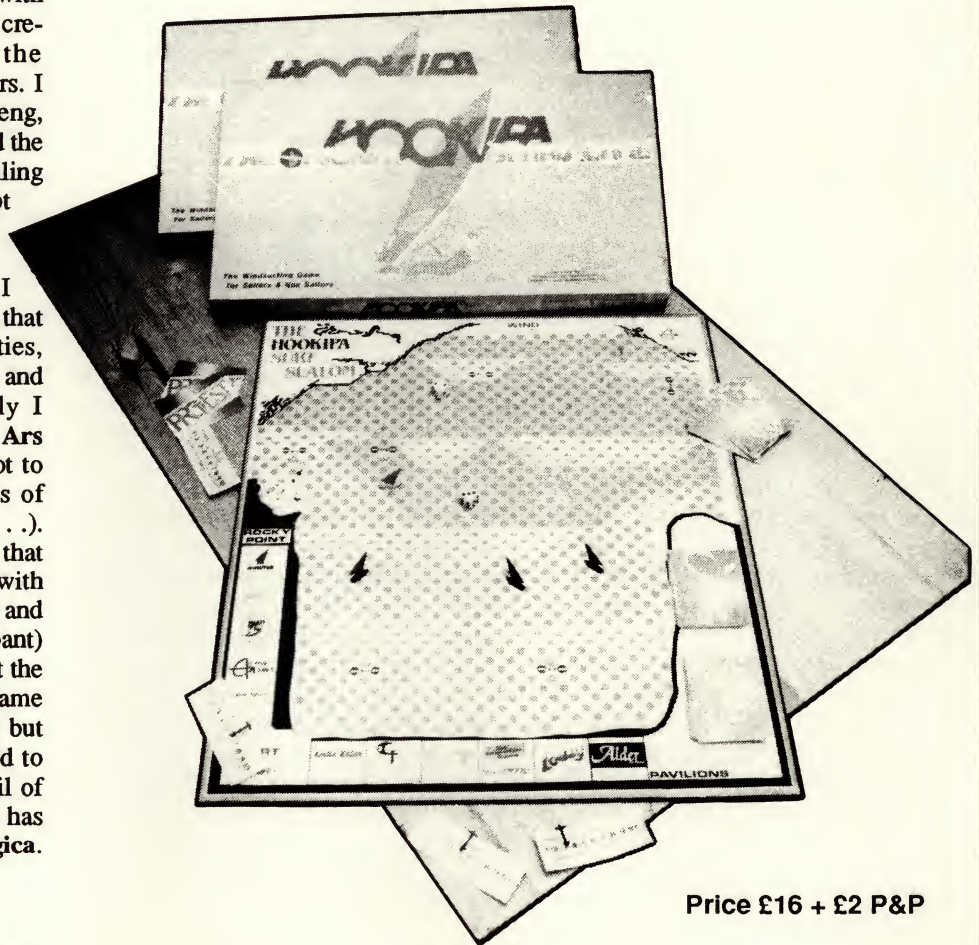
the 19th Century, this game brings out the Sinophile in me. I'm not up to playing Chinese-style – with hidden discards and dangerously high bets – but I'll choose this for a civilised evening's game with non games players anyway, since I can't stand bridge.

Of course, knowing my luck, all this would be academic. Just as I finish un-

packing the stuff, and am taking a well-earned kip on the beach beneath a palm tree, a coconut falls on my head, killing me instantly. The tea-chest serves as an impromptu gravestone. Its inscription reads: 'GAMES. Here lies Paul Mason. He believed in open punctuation. Let him rip.'

GI

# HOOKIPA



Price £16 + £2 P&P

The first in a new line of boardgames from Active Games.

By playing Hookipa you'll learn about the world's fastest growing sport – windsurfing. No game is the same as there are many variations of movement and play. Hookipa closely simulates racing itself and will provide hours of fun for those players who already sail.

Hookipa, a game for 2–12 players, where no previous knowledge of windsurfing is necessary to play. Available with rules in English and German, from:

GI, Lamerton House, 23a High St, Ealing, London W5 5DF

Access/Mastercard and VISA accepted. ☎ 01-579 2612





# SNIPER

## In the limelight

What an entirely sensible decision by this magazine to move into the world of computer games. For one thing, the parties are that much better. Or, as one Virgin employee put it: 'The people in this business are generally far more boisterous and dynamic than those in the games industry'. Certainly the party celebrating the 5th birthday of US Gold at the Limelight club bore this out. Star of the show was comedian Rik Mayall. Unfortunately I arrived just as the young one was taking his leave by telling the audience to go forth and multiply, though the exact words used were of a rather more forthright nature.

## Show off

The big event of the month was the PC show at Earls Court. The first three days were supposedly for trade only. Fat chance. Trainers collided with suits in a frenzied atmosphere while a deafening soundtrack was provided by armies of arcade machines. The classier companies had taken hospitality suites (or 'hostility suites' as they quickly became known) in which to conduct their affairs. The bars, needless to say, were packed throughout with dazed souls seeking refuge from the mayhem. Such was my condition as I strolled over to one of these watering holes when who should I espy but my arch rival 'The Axeman' (aka Wayne) from *GM* magazine. As is usual on these occasions conversation dropped to a murmur when I approached. However, I was able to catch the axe wielder muttering something about a survey and an 'average of 24'. Surely they must have more readers than that, I think to myself. Perhaps he was referring to their IQ?

## First and last

From the crash bang wallop of Earls Court to the altogether more sedate atmosphere of the Café Royale in Piccadilly where Waddingtons were holding a 'Media Play Day'. The object of this exercise was to try to corral sundry hacks into playing their games. A noble idea, but unfortunately most of the scribes appeared to belong to magazines with a combined circulation smaller than the average bus queue – the exceptions being a cub reporter

from the *Daily Star*, and a small, but perfectly formed, hackette from the trendy world of fashion. Does this mean that games are going to be the next crucial happening? Will we see leggy models engaged in marathon sessions of *1829*? Quite possibly, for as it happens, Kate is on assignment for the chic 'message is the medium' magazine *Chat*. Unfortunately, though, her knowledge of games can be gauged from the fact that, prior to this event, she thought *Subbuteo* was the capital of Uruguay. How utterly divine *dahling*. As it happens, I still think *Chanel* is something they're trying to build a tunnel under.

But on with the show, and it's hullo to TV 'personality' Noel Edmonds. Here to present the game that 'he invented': *Telly Addicts*. Moving quickly on from the fascinating discussion as to how this game was conceived, I find myself pressganged into joining a game of *First Impressions*, barely before I have had time to finish my first bottle of champagne. Also present is the games inventor Tom Kremer, the hackette from the *Star*, and two Waddingtons lovelies. The objective of the game is to play a card describing a particular personality trait, and then secretly place a bid as to which of your opponents you think that characteristic best describes. One of the first cards suggested 'a tendency to exaggerate' which made the *Star* hackette an easy choice. Although not the sort of game I usually play, I have to admit it is great fun, though playing it with your loved ones could prove a painful experience. The final analysis of my own character concluded: 'A passionate,

hitch-hiking, manic-depressive'. Finally, a game that has got my number.

## Dwarfed

What *Games International* does today *White Dwarf* does tomorrow? Readers may recall that we offered Greenpeace a free ad in issue #7. Two months later an ad for Greenpeace appears in *White Dwarf*. Could they be, I wonder, in any way related?

## Bomba not a Nazi shock

A debate is taking place in the pages of various American hobby magazines over the publication of 3W's *Tomorrow the World* (see review, page 29). 'Does the game foster Nazi admiration?' is the gist of it. The latest issue of *Wargamer* poses the question: 'What kind of person would design a game about a world in which the German and Imperial Japanese win World War II?'. The answer, of course, is a Ty Bomba kind of person. Never one to miss out on a bit of self publicity, His Highness responds to the question in his own inimitable style: 'I am against racism, sexism, ageism, ethnocentrism, totalitarianism, authoritarianism (*sic*), and pretty much any kind of extremism you can name. I believe the only worthwhile life is one under the conditions of political democracy, wherein the individual – and not some class, race, religion, tribe nation etc – is considered the determinant unit of human destiny.' Thanks, your Majesty. We were all just dying to know that.

The issue is such a spurious one that it raises the suspicion that the entire thing is just a cunning way of hyping the game.

Can anybody really believe that neo-Nazis are going to come crawling out of the woodwork to buy the game? Or that somehow the game will subvert our political values and convince us that Hitler was right all along? If not, then what is all the fuss about? Perhaps instead, these bleeding hearts should turn their attention to games like *Raid on Libya*, published by *S&T* (shortly after the actual raid) in the days when it was owned by TSR. Or how about the various propaganda pieces that have appeared on Nicaragua, in various wargame magazines, wherein it is implied that an American invasion is only right and proper?



*First Impressions*: as the Marquis de Sade once said: 'You always hurt the one you love.'



# The GI Awards '89

*Democracy in action! The people's choice! Perestroika! Yes, this is your big chance to participate in one of the greatest demonstrations of democracy since Plato discovered the soapbox.*

Simply enter your votes on the form below (you don't have to vote in every category) and send your completed form to:

Games International, Lamerton House, 23a High St, Ealing W5 5DF.

We will also aggregate votes received to determine an overall Game of the Year and announce the results in all categories in our January issue.

Closing date for entries: December 12th.

Here are some suggestions. Feel free to vote for games other than these – the only stipulation is that they should have been published (or at least reissued) in 1989. The list include some games which are older, but which have only become available in the UK in the past year.

## GENERAL GAMES

Der Ausreisser  
Ave Caesar  
Buck Rogers  
Circus Imperium  
Enemy in Sight  
First Past the Post  
The Great Khan Game  
HeroQuest  
Liar's Dice  
Die Macher  
McMulti  
Merchant of Venus  
Mertwig's Maze  
Oppression  
Pole Position  
Schoko & Co  
6-Day Race  
Slick  
Space Hulk  
Targui  
Topple

## WARGAMES

Ancients  
Campaigns of Robert E Lee  
Europe Aflame  
Gulf Strike  
Hitler's Last Gamble  
Light Division  
MBT  
Red Storm Rising  
Sky Galleons of Mars

Team Yankee  
Test of Arms  
Tokyo Express  
Tomorrow the World  
Turning Point: Stalingrad

## ROLEGAMES

AD&D 2nd Edition  
Adeptus Titanicus  
Ars Magica  
Cyberpunk  
Griffin Island  
GURPS 3rd Edition  
Shadow World  
Shadowrun  
Something Rotten in Kislev  
Space 1889  
Teenagers From Outer Space  
Trollpak

## COMPUTER GAMES

Borodino  
Curse of the Azure Bonds  
Earl Weaver Baseball  
Fire Brigade  
MBT  
Might & Magic 2  
Millennium 2.2  
Populous  
Pool of Radiance  
Romance of the Three Kingdoms  
TV Sports Football  
Waterloo

### GENERAL GAMES

1.....  
2.....  
3.....

### ROLEGAMES

1.....  
2.....  
3.....

### WARGAMES

1.....  
2.....  
3.....

### COMPUTER GAMES

1.....  
2.....  
3.....



## Flick off

Waddingtons, makers of *Subbuteo*, announce that they are to launch two versions of their 'Italia '90' edition of their classic table-top football game. One will be available through normal outlets and the other, cheaper version, will only be available through Woolworths. The former will be a 'Grandstand' special and contain lots of accessories including a complete grandstand. The transfer fee is a whacking great £49.95. You could try referring this to a tribunal, but they'd probably increase it.



'Some people are on the pitch. They think it's all over!'

The Woolies version comes with a Portakabin, a team strip supplied by Oxfam, and an awayday guide to the Vauxhall Conference League (*That'll be a yellow card for you - Ed*). No, no, sorry ref. Only joking. The Woolies version is more basic and costs only £22.95. Unfortunately neither version contains toilet rolls to throw on the pitch, though you can always supply these yourself. You'll find these especially effective if you take a few spaghetti strands and carefully wrap them . . . (*That's it. You're off - Ed*).

## I am not a number

The game of the series that inspired a thousand commercials is nearly upon us. **GURPS Prisoner** rises like Rover from the deeps in the month of November, complete with 'unique adventures and sinister puzzles.' What about poignant metaphors for the human condition, eh?

Also new is a hardback version of the third edition **GURPS** rules - just in time for referees whose paperback version has fallen to pieces - and **Conan: Bus Driver** in which the mighty Conan takes the wheel of a number 15 bus and attempts to get from Ladbroke Grove to Whitechapel in less than a week. Written by Seats Upstairs Productions.

## Full metal packet

'This September witnesses the onslaught of a major new **Spacelords** release from Metal Magic Miniatures' - thus sayeth

# NEWS

the press release from Hobbygames. Naturally this is a direct result of the 'over-whelmingly good response the first release received earlier this year'. Well, they're hardly going to say the overwhelmingly bad response are they? The new range contains everything from unfriendly phagons to a complete army of hideous Thatcherites (*Are you quite sure about this? - Ed*). The figures are ideal for science fiction role-playing, tabletop gaming, and voodoo curses (*What! - Ed*).

## Bacon

Looking for a chance to get away from your wife/lover/whatever? No? Then why not take him/her/it down to Exeter: 'The city that doesn't sleep' (*Wasn't that New York? - Ed*). As I was saying, the city that doesn't sleep *over the Easter weekend*. Leastways, it won't next year for it is the chosen site of Baycon - the annual games convention. Each year they get thrown out of their previous site so they have to find a new one. Luckily Devon has got enough hotels desperate enough to give them a chance.

Unlike previous years the organising committee have managed to secure the entire Easter weekend for the con. The well known magazine *Games International* will be sponsoring the *Victor Ludorum* tournament, and their writers will be desperately trying to improve on last year's performance. For more details contact Rob Chapman, 7 Baymount, Paignton, Devon TQ3 2LD.

## Hardwires

The **Cyberpunk** game from R Talsorian seems to have touched a chord. Supplements are being churned out at a **Space: 1889** rate, and R Talsorian have got the license to 'do' genuine cyberpunk novels (*Hardwired* and *When Gravity Fails*) for the game.

There's about to be even more competition in the cyberpunk market, though, as FASA gear up to backing up **Shadowrun**, and ICE prepare to enter the fray with their own **Spacemaster** compatible cyberpunk game. And could Steve Jackson be preparing a **GURPS Cyberpunk**? No, shurely not? Including Games Workshop's **Dark Future** (after all, they're

bound to put out rolegame rules for it sooner or later) and GDW's **Earth/Cybertech** supplement for 2300, it looks like fans of Gibson, Sterling et al are going to be spoilt for choice.

## Mind your conventions

Ever since Games Day turned into a **Warhammer** tournament, people have been bemoaning the lack of a proper national games convention. Well, now there's going to be an *international* games convention. Coming to the Novotel in Hammersmith on the 10th and 11th November 1990 will be Mindgames '90, a showcase for all types of gaming. In addition to the staples of boardgames, wargames and rolegames, there will be Play-By-Mail, and Phone-In-game sections.

It should be pointed out that the organisers of Mindgames '90 have no connection with the London Games Fair, or with any of the organisers of that ill-fated show, which was cancelled amid much acrimony, last year. More details as we get them.

## Kick up the Ars

Back in issue #3, we reviewed *Ars Magica*, the rolegame which won the 'Gamer's Choice' award at last year's Origins. Since then it has drawn rapturous reviews from many other magazines - even those not normally associated with perspicacity and taste. Now the game of medieval magery is out in a plusher 2nd Edition, and with a 'jumpstart' adventure called *The Stormrider* for £6.

## STOP PRESS

### The boys done well

A team of GI readers caused shockwaves all over Europe by winning the annual Intergame tournament in Essen. The Bloodstock team were regarded as 1 000 000.00 - 1 outsiders by those in the know (in other words, us). Captain Mick Haytack, editor of the *Bloodstock* fanzine, was quoted as being 'over the moon' at the team's success.

Asked to comment on the reasons for this upset, Mick opined: 'Obviously Brian, the lads went out there determined to give 110% and come back with a result. What can I say? It's tremendous. We would have played for nothing. The prizes and the games were just the icing on the cake.' Several German teams were reported to be as sick as parrots. More news on this, and the Essen Fair, in our next issue. **G**





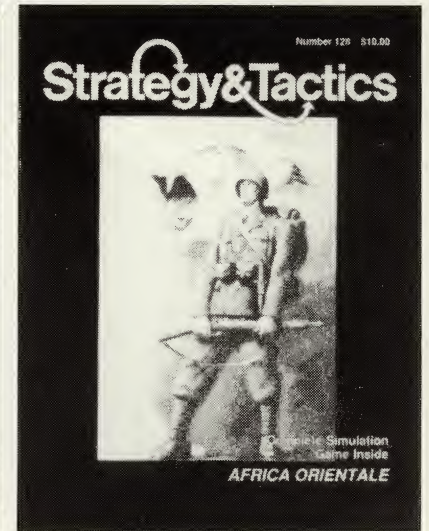
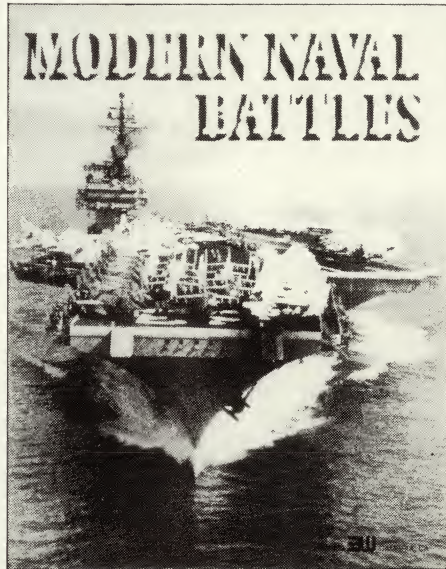
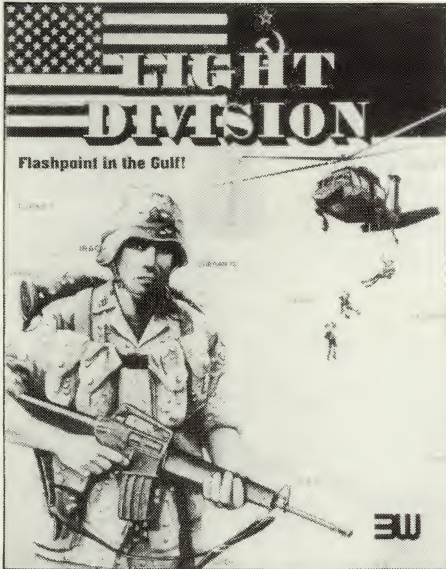
# TMM GAMES

MAKERS OF  
ENDLESS GAMES  
ACCESSORIES

Exclusive Distributors for - FASA Corporation · Columbia Games Inc.  
The Avalon Hill Game Company · Victory Games Inc., New York, NY



**Now over 300 Games and Extension Modules to choose from!**

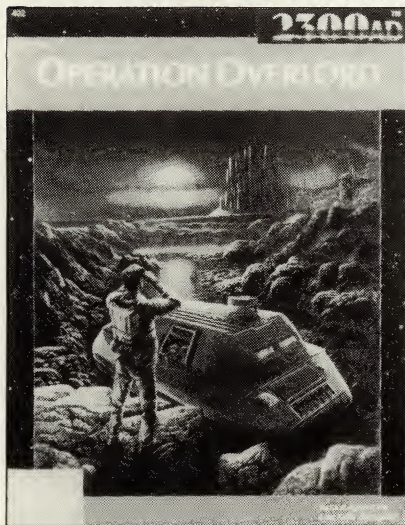


**STRATEGY & TACTICS** is a military history magazine that has a complete board wargame in every issue. A typical game will include a large terrain map; up to 200 die-cut counters, and rules booklet. The magazine includes a major article, usually on the featured game topic, game reviews, variants and hobby news. **S&T** is published 8 times each year.

**WE HAVE BEEN APPOINTED  
EXCLUSIVE UK DISTRIBUTORS FOR  
WORLD WIDE WARGAMES**

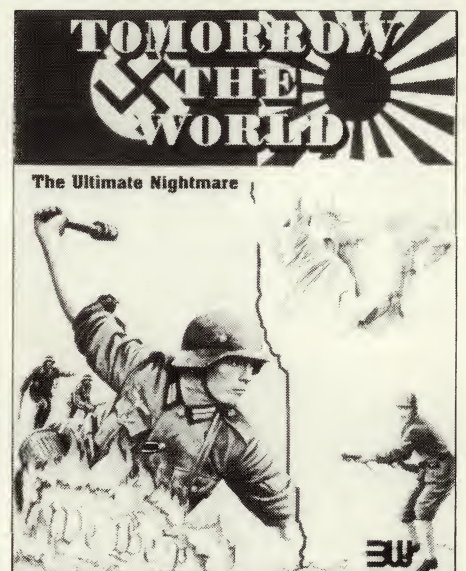
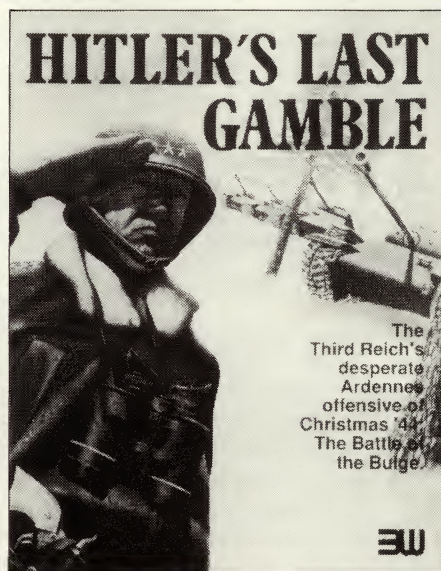


## 2300AD Adventures



**2300AD** - GDW's trademark for its Sci-Fi role-playing game set in the 24th Century.

★ AVAILABLE FROM GOOD GAMES SHOPS NATIONWIDE



- PHONE FOR DETAILS OF GAMES IN DAMAGED BOXES OFFERED AT REDUCED PRICES
- PLEASE SEND S.A.E. FOR COMPLETE LIST OF GAMES
- IN CASE OF DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING ANY GAME - WE CAN SUPPLY DIRECT
- UK POST & PACKING CHARGES - £1.95 FOR ONE GAME · £3.00 FOR 2 GAMES



## TMM GAMES

CHART HOUSE · STATION ROAD · EAST PRESTON  
LITTLEHAMPTON · WEST SUSSEX · BN16 3AG · UK  
TELEPHONE: RUSTINGTON (0903) 773170

(ALLOW UP TO 28 DAYS FOR DELIVERY)



## REVIEWS

## W A R | G A M E S

WORLD IN  
FLAMESDESIGNED BY  
GREG PINDER & HARRY  
ROWLANDPUBLISHED BY  
AUSTRALIAN DESIGN GROUP

PRICE £38

\*\*\*\*\*

What more can you say about a game already admired by thousands and selling well even in its fourth edition? Well, having played it I can now appreciate some of the reasons for its following and the need to keep revising the system.

**World in Flames** is not so much a complex game (the systems are quite easy to assimilate), but more an in-depth treatment of the Second World War at the highest level that demands a lot of effort from its players while offering equal returns in terms of excitement and interest. Whether you are the sort of player for whom the level of effort will be enjoyable is for you to decide. From a reviewer's standpoint, the size of the campaign scenarios rules out a review based on the full game. Therefore, I can do no more than offer my views based on play of one of the scenarios with the aim of conveying some of the game's flavour.

## PRODUCTION

The publishers of **World in Flames** have not skimped on production values, but then at £38 that is the least I would expect. The box (which features some symbolically dodgy artwork) contains 1000 counters, maps and play aids and these are all among the best you will see in the hobby.

The counters in particular are superb, being sharply printed in striking shades and having an excellent glossy finish. Interestingly, the counters are marked '5th

edition' whereas the rules state 4th, which leaves me wondering which version I have been playing. The map, which is rendered in attractive pastels, comes in two sections and covers a substantial area, which means devoting a large table to the game if you have designs on the campaign games.

The rule book is long, reasonably clear and has numerous examples. Where the problem lies is in taking the whole lot in at one go. There are few really innovative or unusual rules, indeed everything is quite logical, but you need to read nearly all of the 30-odd pages to be able to play the game.

This means embracing not only naval, air and land based combat, movement and supply but also production and the various political and special rules. Add to that another eight pages of advanced rules and another twenty of scenarios and charts and you have one major chunk of paper to digest. This is exactly the sort of thing that gives board wargames their reputation for having massive rule books.

I am being unkind here, though, because **World in Flames'** rules make an acceptable job of conveying the system to the reader and their length is partly due to the copious examples, which is no bad thing.

Just about everything is covered that you would expect in a strategic game and, surprisingly, the action is quite interactive; naval and air forces get to carry out interception moves and the general feel is very good indeed. Once you have learned it, it is the smoothness of the system and its atmosphere that really makes the game tick over.

The best part is that each arm has its own sub-system and these are interesting contests in their own right. For instance, we had some fine scraps between the Royal Navy and the Japanese subs in the Pacific. The air game is also well handled and



playable. The game allows a good variety of air missions including recce, bombing, ground support and interception.

## MICRO

The above describes what I have to term the micro level, but the core of the game is really the global politics and the overall logistics of running a world power. Both of these are handled very cleverly by the **World in Flames** system.

The heart of the supply rules is the production spiral on to which are placed all the various navies, armies and planes which you need to do battle in the active theatres. This means forward planning, sometimes measured in years, that really takes a good deal of thought. The strategic situation can shift completely in a few turns and you may wish that aircraft carrier build was actually a parachute division.

A small gripe is that the spiral uses shading to differentiate the areas and this is far from clear. Once a unit has left the production spiral, the player chooses one of that unit type at random from a cup or similar container. This means you have no idea how good a unit will be (in terms of factors) until it is ready for play. This is a nice touch but the number of cups required for all the troop types is a problem.



We ended up with numerous piles of counters from which we drew blind.

As you would expect from a game this size, there are lots of rules queries in the early stages but overall it is fairly straightforward, more so for an experienced gamer familiar with zones of control and the like. The good rules index helps no end here.

Don't, however let all this talk of 'fast' play mislead you – everything is relative and when you are playing a monster, turns can be measured in hours. Two of us played just the first few turns of a scenario and five hours disappeared before we knew it. Scratch one Sunday afternoon. To play even the smaller situations is going to take a long, long time; my estimate is at least twenty hours once you know the system, though obviously team play would help matters. This means it is essential that you play over a weekend or leave the game set up (or take notes of unit locations – less satisfactory) and get on well socially with your opponent.

In conclusion, **World in Flames** has all the unfathomable appeal of **Third Reich** (Avalon Hill) with the backing of a system that actually works, however basic it may be. **World in Flames** won't be everybody's cup of tea (indeed, the sort of player to whom it appeals will probably have bought the game already) but if you are a fan of strategic Second World War games and want the whole works, this is undoubtedly the one to buy. I suspect that most gamers won't have time to play the full game (this is an therefore an ideal desert island choice) but if you are happy enough to tinker with the scenarios and pick out the ideas, that is good enough. Given the expensive price tag of nearly £40, **World in Flames** is only viable for the devoted gamer or club but I foresee that it will be a big hit anyway. Comments on size and cost aside, it is hard to be negative about the game; ADG seem to have achieved what they intended for **World in Flames** and have done it in some style.

Mike Siggins

## CHARTS

### Wargames

- ① **World in Flames** (ADG)
- ② **Europe Aflame** (TSR)
- ③ **Imperium Romanum** (West End)
- ④ **Main Battle Tank** (Avalon Hill)
- ⑤ **Harpoon** (GDW)
- ⑥ **Hollow Legions** (Avalon Hill)
- ⑦ **Air Superiority** (GDW)
- ⑧ **Red Storm Rising** (GDW)
- ⑨ **Open Fire** (Victory)
- ⑩ **Ambush** (Victory)

Chart supplied by Virgin Games.

## TOMORROW THE WORLD

DESIGNED BY  
TY BOMBA

PUBLISHED BY  
3W

PRICE £27.99



My long time wargames companion refused to play **Tomorrow the World**, because he found the whole idea distasteful. But then his grandfather, winner of an Iron Cross First Class on the Western Front in the First World War, was forced to flee from the city his family had lived in for centuries simply because he happened to be a Jew (*What's the difference between playing this and, say, the German side in a more conventional wargame?* – Ed).

### THE THREE STIGMATA

It is impossible even to begin considering **Tomorrow the World** without such a digression. It is, after all, a simulation of a hypothetical world where the Axis powers won the Second World War, and divided up the world between them. As

the designer has acknowledged elsewhere, the game was inspired by the Philip K Dick novel *The Man in the High Castle*. The Final Solution, presumably, has continued unhindered.

Hitler's Munich beer hall putsch of 1923 is successful in this world, while Franklin Delano Roosevelt is assassinated before even becoming president. America becomes isolationist. The Second World War begins: without America, the Allies fall before the Axis powers. The Axis then invade the US and dissect it. And now, in the game's alternate 1948, the Thousand Year Reich and the Empire of the Sun face each other like jackals over a corpse. It is up to you, as the German and Japanese players, to decide which of two evils dominate. Not a very nice job.

### FLOW MY TEARS

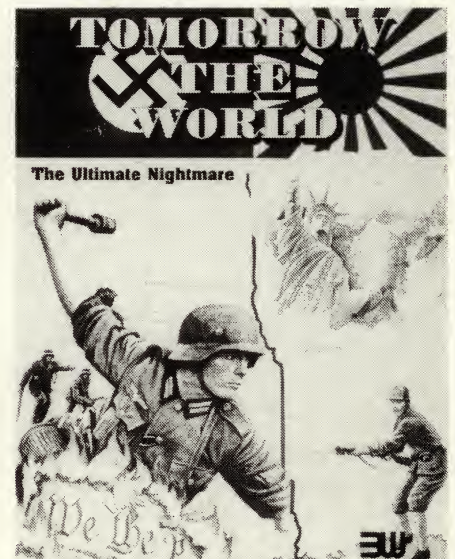
But enough of this: what about the game? Frankly, my dears, I found myself not giving much of a damn. When a game's author thinks so little of his potential public that he allows a game to be published in the state this one was, then he can hardly blame said public for staying away in droves.

Take the map, for a start. It is one of the least aesthetically pleasing maps I can remember seeing in my 20 years board wargaming. To begin with, while ground movement is conducted using an area movement system, with contiguous locations joined by straight lines, sea

movement uses a square grid. Why? Surely area movement could have handled naval action as well as ground? It does, after all, in **Pax Britannica**.

Then there are the errors. The Errata slip – which itself has been corrected, in a completely different typeface – contains far too many corrections. I'm not even going to bother to comment on the fact that you have to trim one of the maps so they fit together, then redraw connecting lines.

Then you have simple questions like: when is a port not a port? There is some confusion, for example, over whether the rules classify New York City as a port. For





that matter, London's status is not entirely clear, though common sense can be applied in each case. Kiel is quite clearly not a port: I must check my atlas on that one. Matters could have been made so much clearer with a simple anchor symbol.

Add to that the large number of misprints and area dots miscoloured, and you should get the idea.

The rules are also less than impressive. The charts included have not been printed in the centre section of the rule book ('incredibly', the errata slip says with some understatement, before suggesting players cut the charts out with a razor blade) and two completely blank pages have been mysteriously included.

It must be said, though, that the rules are easy to learn, because of their extreme simplicity. Units – armour, infantry, air forces and navies – spend movement points to move from one area to another.

The different colours of the areas denote different terrain. Combat occurs when one of your units enters an area with enemy forces.

Combat is basic. You each line up your counters, then you take it in turns to fire one counter at one target counter. Roll the right number and that unit is dead. Repeat until battle ends.

There are a few frills, but they appear to have been tacked on to increase 'historical accuracy'. The Germans have a paratroop army and E100 supertanks, while the Japanese have captured Russian rocket scientists. Each player can cause UN revolts in occupied territories. Both sides have nuclear weapons.

### SIMULACRA

While gameplay is quick, because of the degree of simplicity of the rules, the game itself will take hours to finish – according to the author, a full game 'may take about

a bazillion hours to finish.' To me, I'm afraid, this is just another indication of the lack of thought which has gone into the game.

All in all, a disappointment. I like alternate history fiction, because as a wargamer I enjoy exploring 'What Might Have Beens'. But I prefer to feel that a bit of effort has gone into it. **Operation Typhoon**, the old SPI solitaire invasion of Japan game played pretty well, all things considered, as did Seelowe, the German invasion of the UK. I'm afraid I'd have to rank **TTW** alongside **Dixie**, the *S&T* 'If the south had won the Civil War . . .' game – not too hot.

If anyone does want to fight out such a simulation, then they would be better served buying a copy of **Axis and Allies** and spending half an hour coming up with their own rules for nuclear bombs et al.

*Martin Croft*

## SPACE 1889: SOLDIER'S COMPANION

DESIGNED BY  
FRANK CHADWICK

PUBLISHED BY  
GDW

PRICE £9.99

\*\*\*

**Space 1889** was a long time coming but since then GDW have made amends by releasing a steady stream of supplements, figures and rule sets. The latest in the sequence is the **Soldier's Companion** which is intended to cover the area of massed land combat, both on Earth and the planets. Because of the way the rules are presented, it is possible to approach them in two ways; firstly as a set of role-game spinoff rules (in the tradition of **Swords & Spells** (TSR)) and secondly as a set of historical colonial rules with some strange additions that are best ignored. Sadly, because of its unbalanced content, the **Soldier's Companion** is unexceptional from either angle.

The book is 180 pages long and comprises five main sections: the battle rules, campaign rules, a section on hardware, a set of army lists and the designer's notes.

As far as presentation goes, the colour cover is impressive and raises one's hopes for the contents. The paper is of a good quality but I found the typeface to be rather fuzzy; I suspect use of a laser printer rather than typeset print here. Illustrations vary from very good to rather weak. The text is complemented by various pictures showing either Earthbound or planetary combat and gives as good a flavour as you can expect from black and white photographs.

The sections of the book vary in quality. The opening chapter on the miniatures rules is comprehensive and the system looks interesting, but isn't going to win any awards for innovation. They are fairly simple and look as if they should give a good fast game. Obviously, without playing a sample battle, it is hard to be sure of this but they do look serviceable and are clearly written.

### SCRATCHBUILT

Areas covered include normal infantry, cavalry and artillery systems with the addition of rules for sieges, 'tripods', armoured trains, 'land juggernauts' (which are primitive tanks) and all other the weird stuff to suit the **Space 1889** environment. Section three also has details of the heavier weaponry which can be used in the game, but because of the unusual subject matter, most of them (apart from guns) will have to be scratchbuilt.

The best section is undoubtedly that covering campaigns and scenarios, but

sadly it is also the shortest. A woeful six pages cover campaign rules and suggestions. This is backed up by a good section on role-playing military personnel and career development. It is here that there is enough enthusiasm and useful content to generate some ideas for the players – surely the only way of getting away from the meaningless one-off battle. If this rule book is going to appeal, and be used, it will be by players who are running a well developed **Space 1889** campaign where battles will occur and have relevance.

## Star Ratings

\*\*\*\*\*

First class game. Hall of Fame material

\*\*\*\*

A good game, even if the subject doesn't appeal to you

\*\*\*

Competent but nothing special

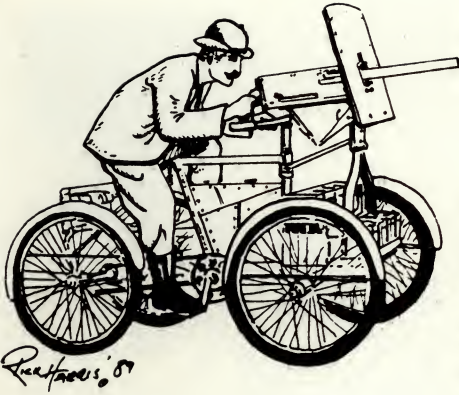
\*\*

Not recommended unless you're especially interested in the subject



A true turkey





That is going to be difficult to achieve without a heavy investment in miniatures for what will probably be a transient interest area for most gamers.

### EXTRATERRESTRIALS

The bulk of the book, some seventy pages in all, covers the army lists of Earth and the extraterrestrials. Each participant is given a potted military history and the major players get coverage of organization, units, uniforms and weapons. This level of detail would be fine for the odd few important countries, perhaps taking up twenty pages overall, but we also get uniform details for the likes of Chile and Rumania among others. These are not exactly world powers. How many people are likely to go to the cost and effort of buying and painting a Chilean army in this period? Very few I would suggest. This amount of material seems a waste of valuable space which surely could have been used for some more scenarios, a sample campaign, evocative maps or indeed anything rather than the colour of Japanese epaulettes. Better still, why not reduce the page count and the price? It looks very much as if, in an effort to fill up pages, the easy route of reproducing a few uniform books was taken in preference to developing the more difficult, but useful, material.

The book is rounded out with a set of designer's notes, a bibliography and some plans (with costs) for landships, planes, helicopters and even a Zeppelin. Frank Chadwick, the designer, is quite clear as to how he approached the rules. They are intended as a set of colonial miniatures rules first and foremost with the necessary additions for the science fiction tacked on.

Unless I misread the comments, it seems that Chadwick would have preferred to do just the straight rules. It appears that the limited historical market size has dictated the rest, which is borne out by the 'bolted on' 1889 features of some of the other modules in the series. The flair of this famous designer comes through at

times, especially in the campaign section, but there is too much waffle and not enough substance.

### DUBIOUS NOTES

Overall, the *Soldier's Companion* is a useful purchase only if you are likely to need these rules or are looking for a new historical set. It offers little else if you already have the rolegame and modules. This is sad because it could have been an excellent product if the balance of material were better. The chance was there to publish a modern set of colonial miniatures rules spiced with atmosphere for the *Space 1889* worlds (including colonial Earth), thereby pleasing two markets at once and perhaps encouraging 'cross-

over' by rolegamers or vice versa. What we have is a product that has an acceptable miniatures system, lots of dubious notes and very few real ideas. Consequently, I am reverting to my previous views about *Space 1889* – that the system is something of a half-boiled concept that really isn't going to come off. If, as I suspect, GDW are sitting on good ideas for the system then they should be released as soon as possible. I hope for GDW's and colonial gaming's sake that there is a future for the system, but unless the standard of output improves it is hard to see how *Space 1889* will keep going.

Mike Siggins



## Balboa Game Company



WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTORS of:

★ Games ★ Software ★ Miniatures

We carry complete lines from all of the industry leaders.

We offer fast, reliable mail order service by UPS or parcel post. Send \$4 each for our latest game or miniatures catalogs or send \$2 for our latest software catalog.

Please call (213) 437 5469 for Dealer Enquiries.

1507 Oregon Avenue  
Long Beach CA 90813 USA



## LIGHT DIVISION

DESIGNED BY  
JOE BALKOSKI & AUSTIN BAY

PUBLISHED BY  
WORLD WIDE WARGAMERS

PRICE £22.95



**Light Division** is a contemporary operational level game portraying US military involvement in Iran. Co-designed by Joe Balkoski, it posits an attempt by American rapid deployment forces to seize and hold the area around the port of Bandar al Abbas against the Iranians (and, in some scenarios, Soviets) in order to prevent the closure of the Straits of Hormuz. With a scale of one day to a turn and one mile to the hex, the map covers the area immediately around Bandar al Abbas, including critical airfields, communication facilities, and launch sites for the Silkworm anti-shipping missile. With game units of company to battalion size, the US player is given only five days to capture and hold his objectives against the enemy.

### SLICK

The game comes boxed with a dense 32 page rule book, 400 back printed counters and a ten-sided die. The glossy hex map is largely covered with areas of white on a white background and is accompanied by a massive list of errata indicating that the map designer has seriously screwed-up his job. I appreciate the time and expense involved in making up mapboard artwork, but I think that 3W could do better than include a tatty map with an errata slip in the final product. The charts and tables appear on the pull out centre pages of the rule book and are adequate, if poorly laid out.

Fans of Joe Balkoski will recognise **Light Division's** game system from his previous games such as **St Lo**, **Omaha Beachhead** and **Korean War**. The heart of the game is the system of interactive turns known as operations cycles. There are two cycles to each game turn, and each begins by having the player with initiative roll the die. The result (zero to nine) is the number of operations that player must perform with his units. After he has performed all the operations he can, he then passes the die over to his opponent who rolls for the number of operations he must perform. The cycle keeps alternating like this until both sides have passed or exhausted all their units.

This game mechanic is simple, slick and nicely represents the unpredictable back-and-forth swing of fire, movement and initiative, keeping both player's concentration on play at all times.

The basic operation a player can perform is activation, which allows him to use a stack or unit for movement and combat. To fight or move costs tactical points of which a unit gets three when it is activated, and when these points are used up the unit is flipped over and can't be used again until the next cycle. Other types of operation allow for airdrops, amphibious assaults and airmobile movement.

### COMBAT

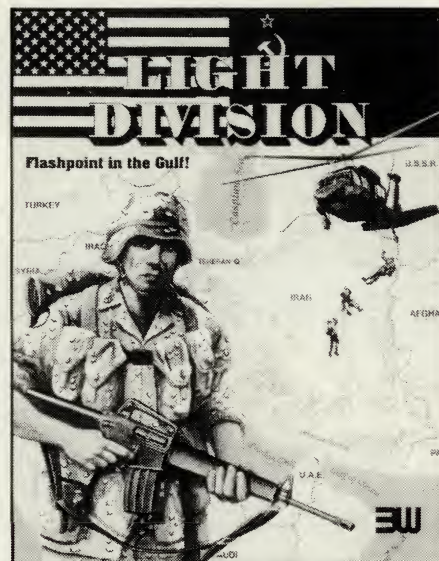
The combat system uses odds ratios and is deadly: far too deadly in my opinion. Combat in **Light Division** eats up battalions, and with the tempo of operations so high, it is easy to see entire formations completely wiped out. I'm not entirely convinced that this is accurate. The formations portrayed in the game are predominantly large units of leg infantry and to see them annihilate each other this way is an unreal experience.

Part of the problem with the combat system is the amount of fire support available. Fire support comes in four flavours, from helicopters, artillery, naval support and air strikes, and is most effective when used offensively. The type of support available to a ground attack depends on how many tactical points a player expends. Furthermore, each artillery, air and naval unit used in a combat costs operations, thus (in theory) limiting the amount of firepower that can be brought to bear.

Unfortunately, the values of these support units represent potent force multipliers and can shift the odds ratios up quite dramatically, especially where aircraft are involved. Air power in **Light Division** is hideously overrated and aircraft units have firepower out of all proportion to reality. I don't know how the designers calculated the aircraft units' values, but I would suggest that they got their sums very wrong.

### SCENARIOS

Advanced and optional rules in the game allow for supply, airlift and sealift reinforcements, commandos, entrenchments and human wave attacks by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. The random events rules merely serve to generate B52 strikes or attacks from Soviet Backfire bombers and Iranian Silkworm missiles. Additional reinforcements can also arrive



randomly, including detachments of British (2 Para and a squadron of Harriers), French, Canadian and Israelis.

There are five scenarios in all, the first three concentrating on the American assault on Iranian forces around the port of Bandar al Abbas. The last two assume that the Soviets have already captured the port by land and air and have dug in against the American invasion. Victory is determined entirely by the capture of victory point hexes, although the points for these can be reduced if, at the end of the game, these hexes are within the bombardment range of enemy artillery. On the whole, the scenarios seem reasonably balanced, albeit very bloody. However, it is usually no fun at all being the Iranian player who seems like he's on to a hiding to nothing when forced up against the superior firepower of the US.

### AUTHENTICITY

The problem with wargames like **Light Division** that are set in the immediate future is that their authenticity is entirely dependent on the basic assumptions the designer makes about the conflict being simulated. If these assumptions are wrong (and who is to say they're right?), then the game is wrong, and worse, a misleading model of the situation portrayed. There is a temptation for some designers to approach a hypothetical war scenario by 'number crunching', that is, designing a game purely on quantifiables like firepower or movement. Such an approach in an operational level wargame ignores the 'wider picture'—those indefinable factors that possibly play the greatest part in shaping the course of a conflict.

In **Light Division**, the designers have attempted to divorce the background from the game, and so present the conflict purely from the military standpoint. To do this, they have essentially adopted a



'number crunching'. All the players get in the game are the orders of battle for the various protagonists, and a bunch of objective hexes to fight over; they are then left to hammer it out between them. I believe that this approach and some of the basic assumptions of the designers are wrong.

Firstly, it worries me that the designers believe that the recourse by America to military intervention in Iran would be a straight stand up fight for control of territory. They don't seem to comprehend that events both on the battlefield and on the world stage could cause political (and by implication, military) agendas to change in the twinkling of an eye, thus changing the nature and objectives of the ground battle as it is going on. To divorce the political sphere from the game turns *Light Division* into little more than a military arcade game and not the authentic simulation the designers like to think it is.

Lee Brimmicombe-Wood

## HITLER'S LAST GAMBLE

DESIGNED BY  
DANNY S PARKER

PUBLISHED BY  
3W

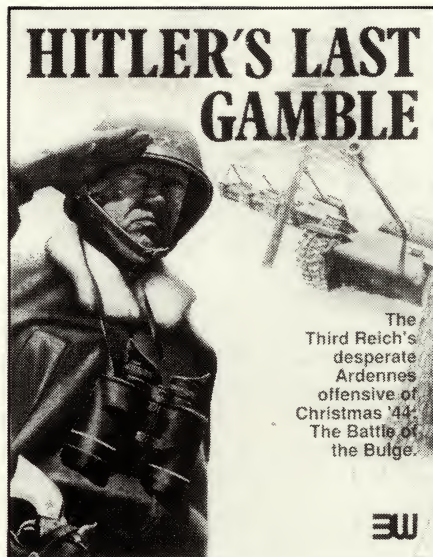
PRICE £27.50

\*\*\*

'Soldiers of the Western Front, your great hour has arrived. Large attacking armies have started against the Anglo-Americans. I do not have to tell you anything more on that; you feel it yourselves: *w gamble everything.*'

Von Rundstedt's message is, of course, referring to what was to be one of history's greatest and best known battles – the Battle of the Bulge, 1944.

For whatever reason, this particular battle holds fascination for many – in particular the designer of this game, who has designed two previous Bulge games: *Battle for the Ardennes* (SPI/TSR) and *Dark December* (OSG) and assisted in the design of two others, *Wacht am Rhein* (SPI) and *The Battle of the Bulge* (Avalon Hill). Is there any need for a further game on this subject? Well, before proceeding, let's take a look at the package.



### CONTENTS

The contents immediately give the impression of a well researched and full game. Four counter sheets provide the game's 700 counters. All armour units have an appropriate silhouette to identify them, and the remaining unit types use the standard military markings found in most wargames.

The playing area is formed from two 20" by 32" paper maps, which show in great detail the whole battle area. The maps are mainly light and dark green, representing this heavily wooded region, with areas of white showing clear and rough terrain. The road net is shown in red (major) and black (standard). My first impression was that artistically, the map is the weakest part of the game, but a close up examination shows that this is not so. The stark terrain does allow the naming of all the villages across the board. It is a real pleasure to scan this map for the names of towns and villages that crop up in various narratives.

A 32 page booklet gives a brief historical narrative, a comprehensive order of battle, and a fascinating replay of the first turn by showing the main fifteen historical regimental combats on the first day, and comparing these attacks in game terms with fifteen game attacks for analysis.

The 32 page rule book mentioned on the back of the box actually turns out to be a whopping 52 page rule book with a further 18 page section of game and set-up charts. Like the rest of the game it's a shining example of the designer's amazing knowledge of his subject.

All in all, nice components that come together to form a substantial game: hence the price, which probably reflects the cost of development.

This is a big game, and falls into the lower end of the monster category, taking between 24 and 36 hours to play (so says the blurb). My first game took longer, but this is probably because I tried to assimilate all the rules in one go rather than using the basic rules to get a better grounding in the system. The game detail takes some time to digest. It's not that the game procedures are particularly difficult, rather that there are a lot of conditions dotted throughout the rules to take account of the many variables in this campaign.

### RULE BOOK

The rule book is divided into basic, advanced and optional rules and the author suggests that in the basic game, players should try 'The Last Blitzkrieg' – an eight turn (five to 10 hour) scenario of the first crucial days or 'Wacht am Rhein' – a 20 turn (12–24 hour) scenario which gives the German attack and allows the American counter attack; thus overall it is not so one sided.

Units in *Hitler's Last Gamble* represent regiments, brigades and battalions. The ground scale is two miles per hex, and turns represent eight hours for day and sixteen hours for night.

The advanced rules bring in air units, German commando operations, surrender, further effects of terrain on armour, fuel dumps, and forming battle groups. The operational rules are best left until players have at least mastered the basic and advanced games although commanders are used for the first time in the optional section and players should try to include them as soon as possible.

Other optional rules include variable weather, Operation Grief, special rules for individual unit types such as the Tiger battalions, tank recovery, road jams and unit reorganisation. The game plays perfectly well solitaire, providing an excellent study of this campaign.

A substantial part of the booklet is given over to the kind of reading that most other games starve their players of: in depth scenario observations, players' notes, variants and designer's notes. The designer's notes are six full pages long, and are further indication that the designer is a leading authority in this area.

### GAME SEQUENCE

Once players have a grasp of the system, the other two scenarios can be considered: the full campaign or the smaller 'We cannot force the Meuse', which covers the height of the German advance



but unfortunately takes rather a long time to set up owing to the large number of counters that are in play by December 22nd.

The game sequence is fluid and although quite simple, perfectly models the way this battle was fought. The German player always goes first and follows the phases in this sequence.

*Supply phase:* check all units in play for supply and isolation.

*Replacement phase:* replacement points allow units to be built up to strength.

*Reserve designation phase:* create reserves. There are two types, combat reserves or exploitation reserves.

*Movement phase:* move any friendly units.

*Enemy reaction phase:* the enemy can react with units that have reserve status.

*Combat phase:* friendly units may attack if they wish.

*Exploitation phase:* friendly units in reserve may move, exploitation units move up to their full movement allowance, combat reserves move at half movement allowance but then may attack.

*Engineer phase:* improved positions and so on.

The Allied player then follows the same steps and the turn ends. This sequence of play is expanded upon by the introduction of air units, but the format basically remains the same. The enemy reaction phase and exploitation phase are not new game procedures, but their inclusion gives a 'Bulge' flavour to this game and allows the units to behave in a realistic fashion.

## FUEL DUMPS

There are some obvious hallmarks of a Bulge game, fuel being the classic example. The Allies had extensive fuel dumps in the area, and the Germans had a chronic fuel problem. In depth rules cover these, and as the game proceeds, the German player will become increasingly frustrated by the consequences of fuel shortage.

Two of the Allied dumps hold a surprise for the Germans as although the dump counters are held on the map, the Allies can secretly record their true locations up to two hexes away from the counters.

This represents the fact that the Germans did not know the exact location of these two dumps.

Air support can only appear in clear weather with restrictions on night turns, so the Germans enjoy many turns free of this Allied menace, although they have a respectable air capacity of their own. Those special units such as the 150th Brigade are given individual attention in the rules and are typical of the extra rules and quirks that must be remembered to ensure this game's historicity.

The Ardennes was a heavily forested area, and control of the road net was essential for all movement. Thus the importance of key road centres such as Bastogne is guaranteed. Units move slowly off road and roads (as in the battle) determine the direction of thrusts. To assist with off road movement, we have a rule called march movement. This allows units not adjacent to an enemy unit (for the whole turn) to move off road at a lower rate, although vehicles may not use this type of movement until after 23rd December when the ground is frozen, and before the snows of 28th December.

Woods also affect the zones of control of armoured units. A zone of control does not extend into a woods hex from armour unless a road runs through the hex. Forget this rule at a crucial point and you could pay dearly.

## COMBAT

Combat uses the 'odds ratio' method of firepower calculation which is further modified by die roll modifiers and column shifts. Terrain types are already built into the tables. Two separate tables cover day and night combats. A common result is that of engaged: this leaves the units in place after indecisive action, but on such a result, the player can have a second bite at the cherry by calling up reserve units and refighting the battle. The Germans have a strict timetable that requires vigorous forward movement and every hold up can contribute to defeat.

Many rules deal with the peculiarities of the Ardennes, and remembering all the fine points can prove difficult. I always manage to get to the end of a game session and then upon reflection suddenly recall one or more rules that I had neglected to use. This alone makes this game unsuitable for the casual gamer.

## SCOPE

Some readers may already own a Bulge game and be wondering if they need this

one. Bearing in mind that Danny Parker has had his finger in so many Bulge pies, it is not surprising to see the same mechanics and procedures cropping up, such as the engaged combat result.

Avalon Hill's *Battle of the Bulge* has nowhere near the scope of this game, but it is playable in one sitting and it is in wide circulation. *Battle for the Ardennes*, reprinted by TSR but already mostly unavailable, allows shorter, one sitting, scenarios by using the quad system to look at a specific area of the battle isolated from the rest of the campaign area. The game also includes a 1940 Ardennes counter mix, but the campaign game (all four quad maps together) is a 20 hour plus affair and has shortcomings compared to this game.

*Dark December* with its vile bright orange map and SPI's *Wacht am Rhein* are probably now limited to collectors shelves. *Hitler's Last Gamble* would suggest that they are ready for retirement.

## THE GAME

*Hitler's Last Gamble* does include for the first time a lot of new information based upon recent research. In particular the order of battle has been researched to a standard rarely seen in wargames. All scenarios are played on the whole campaign map and therefore players always have an overview of the big picture.

My overall view of the game is that it is excellent. It is one of the most well researched games that I have come across and no doubt will be dubbed the definitive Bulge game. It is a serious game with an exceptionally strong historical perspective and serves as an excellent study of the campaigns. The map is particularly useful when it is used in conjunction with an authoritative account of the battle such as Charles B MacDonald's *The Battle of the Bulge*.

For my own preference, I would like to have seen the definitive game done at a simpler level that would allow this most interesting campaign to be played in one evening, but perhaps then it would lose much of the detail that makes it 'definitive'.

I welcomed the opportunity to review this game, although perhaps my wife might not agree. She is pleased to have her house and husband back.

*Norman Smith*



## DESIGN NOTES

# A question of initiative

**Dave Berry**

The Australian Design Group's *World in Flames* impressed me greatly when I played it over the summer. It covers the whole of the Second World War, and does it very well. I want to describe one small part of the system, and suggest a variant.

Initiative in *World in Flames* determines who moves first each turn. Each side then takes turns conducting offensives. At the end of each offensive, a die is rolled to see if the turn ends. The chance of the turn ending increases with the number of offensives that have taken place that turn (increasing more rapidly in severe weather).

Initiative goes to the side that rolls highest on a die. But a simple system like that leaves a lot to chance. So the designers have added an extra element to reduce the amount of luck.

The *World in Flames* initiative chart is a 2x3 arrangement of boxes as shown below.

A counter is placed on this track to record who has the initiative. If the counter is in the top row, the Axis have the initiative; if it's in the bottom row, the Allies have

initiative. The numbers in the boxes indicate modifiers to the die roll of the player with the initiative.


Now comes the clever bit. If the counter is in a shaded area (shown by cross-hatching in the diagram), the player with the initiative may demand a re-roll of the initiative. After any re-roll, the counter must be moved one box toward the other end of the track. Therefore you can have a second chance, but it's only worth taking when really necessary, or you'll fritter away your advantage.

The counter is also moved towards the other end of the track if the player with the advantage has both the first and last offensives in a given turn. This is to offset the advantage of having the 'extra' attack. When initiative changes, the counter is moved up or down as appropriate, but it isn't moved along.

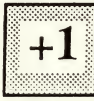



This seems a neat system to me, giving some control, yet leaving enough chance to reflect the uncertainty of fighting a real war.



My variant is to allow re-rolls for the die roll that determines if the turn ends, as well as for the initiative roll. In my first game I mishandled the Russian defences dreadfully, but I was saved by rolling a 1

at the crucial moment. My opponent had only three offensives that turn, where a typical figure for clear weather is five. I didn't deserve that, and I think if my opponent had been able to demand a re-roll it would have been a fairer game. Obviously the counter would still be moved toward the other end of the track after every re-roll.

If you think this system still depends too much on chance, you could substitute an automatic win for a re-roll. I haven't tried this; to me it removes too much luck from the system, making it too easy to guarantee success at crucial moments. Tastes vary, so don't let me put you off giving it a try. 

## INITIATIVE TRACK

AXIS			0
ALLIES	0		

 ,  = May ask for re-roll

## GAMERS IN EXILE

283 Pentonville Road  
LONDON N1 9NP, UK  
Tel: 01-833-4971

Opening hours:  
Monday 1pm - 6.15pm  
Tuesday to Saturday  
10am - 6.15pm

Painted Figures  
Citadel  
Dixons  
Standard  
Games Workshop  
Grenadier  
Avalon Hill  
TSR  
Essex  
'Zines

Mail Order (UK only) +10% Postage  
& Packing

ACCESS

VISA



## CONVENTION REPORT

# Padcon 89

## PADUA

### September 15-17

*Andy Daglish reports from the 7th Italian national convention for players of wargames.*

After meeting relatively few tourist-gamers at last year's event (Romacon 88), I felt that there might be strong representation from the Irish community at this year's gathering in Padua, Padcon 89. The name conjured thoughts of free Guinness and emigré Irish discussing the Old Country under the baking Italian sun. As it happened, it was pleasantly cool, and the foreigners present this time were Italophiles Murray 'Alesia' Cowles, Barry Beavis, and I, along with the Viennese delegation, comprising Herbert Gratz and Hans Mladenek. Also present were a couple of French rolegamers, as well as over 300 domestic players.

#### PRIMERA

First stop after arriving was Guido Tremazzi's game stall. There are always interesting things on display that sold out long ago back in the UK. I quickly bought the ADG version of **Empires in Arms** (with stiff map sheets) and saw many other unusual wargames. **Third World War** by Bero Toys *looked* interesting, as well as the **Vittoria-Albuera** double bill by Jeux Descartes.

There are a large number of home produced games around in Europe; perhaps the advent of the single Euromarket will fill our shops with these products (with translations, of course), but somehow I doubt it. For example, our friends in Hungary have produced three high quality games: a Second World War in Europe effort, a game about cannibals, perhaps on the same type of subject as **Source of the Nile**, and a game on the fighting between the Magyars and Turks in the 1560s.

There's nothing like choosing the time and period you know best. It is a shame that there were no English rules – the convention organiser told me he travels to Budapest regularly, and has spent six months learning Hungarian pronunciation. Reading and writing come next. Maybe if the rules were stamped 'Top Secret' and sent to MI6?

The serious games in play were **Terrible Swift Sword**, **World in Flames** and **Auerstadt**. **Talisman** and all its expansions were much in evidence, as was **Britannia** (an ardent Royalist confided to Murray that he had learned a new English folk song. When asked what it was called, he proudly proclaimed: 'Rule Britannia'! This gentleman must have been especially pleased with the *S&T* game **Far Seas**). **Blue Max** was played continuously, and also **Up Front**, with most trying to avoid playing the Italians. This was fine by me – I like Sgt Capone and his men, but then I liked **Magic Realm**, **Scrimmage** and **Dixie** when they first came out.

#### SECONDO

As usual, there was an impressive array of cups for the competition winners. The

standard of opposition would surprise the keenest players, and this is one good reason for turning up, the downside being that if you *do* win, your considerable effort will be rewarded with a trophy resembling a wastepaper basket on a pedestal, in gold. These must be hard to pack, and anyway count as an offensive weapon at airport customs. I entered for **ASL** and **Up Front**, and was soundly leathered at both, as one might expect (cries of 'No, no'). After a while, Hans 'Madman' Mladenek bayoneted his way to the **Up Front** prize, which he says he will put next to the one he won last year in Rome.

Whereas the gaming area was fine, our hotel was not. It resembled a sort of posh barracks, and was very noisy, which gave us restless nights. Worse, some unfortunates had to share double beds, and they also didn't get much sleep – whether through anticipation or concern I cannot say!

Next year we return to the Ente Corsi in Verona for Vercon 90. This is a great venue, with everything under one roof – it started life as a monks' seminary. If only we had a modern, disused monastery here in Manchester . . . GI

## IN THE GREAT CHRISTMAS SPECIAL ISSUE OF GI:

**AGAINST ALL ODDS:** Winning strategies for **Civilization** and **Britannia**.

**ESSEN GAMES FAIR:** Full report and pictures.

**COLLECTOR'S SPECIAL,** brought to you by the Big Game Hunter.

Ten new games reviewed, plus all the usual fun and features.



REVIEWS

# R O L E | G A M E S

## TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE

DESIGNED BY  
MIKE PONDSMITH

PUBLISHED BY  
R TALSORIAN

PRICE £5.99

\*\*\*



You: A Cool of 1 and a Looks of 5. Obviously.

Despite the evidence of the above box, the name of this game is 'wacky'. We are firmly in *Toon* and *Ghostbusters* territory with this game, and the credit: 'Additional Material: Greg Costikyan' is the final giveaway. The scenario is simple: it turns out all those little green persons in UFOs really dig Earth culture, man, and want nothing better than to send their progeny to that classic Earth institution: High School (in typical American fashion, the designer blithely asserts that

High Schools all around the world are the same as in the US). The result – *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* meets *Happy Days* meets Jabba the Hutt's entourage, and then they all go to the Mall for a McDoggies burger.

This is a stupid game (pause for the authors to say 'Hmm, he actually got the point,' as they promised they would). The rules follow the *Toon* principle of being simple but effective: skills and stats (including such ratings as Relationship with Parents and Bod) are rated on a one to six scale. To do anything you roll a die and add your stat, succeeding if you get a better score than your opponent (which can be a difficulty rating plus the roll of one die). That's it. The rest of the book primes you with enough humorous material to run a wild game . . . if you're the kind of person who loves off-the-wall American humour. This game only works if the players turn into animals from start to finish and the referee throws all subtlety, intelligence and taste out the window.

One of the main motivations in the game is to get a date, but unfortunately the main joke in the game is that coitus is *always* interruptus. Thinking up new and imaginative ways of achieving this will be the

referee's most important task. Suggestions provided include spaceships crashing into your living room, hordes of lemmings passing through, and Captain Kirk beaming in by mistake.

An important feature of the game is the 'bonk' stat. Not in its accepted English meaning, for reasons I've already explained, but as a measure of hit points. When your bonk is reduced to zero, you stand around looking stupid for a turn (like 'falling down' in *Toon*).

You should have got the picture by now. Most of the 94 page book consists of ideas and scenarios – generally quite funny. If you like *Toon* and *Ghostbusters*, and fancy playing that kind of game in an American High School setting, then *Teenagers* is great fun. If not, then it'll provide you with a few laughs, at least, and six quid is a very reasonable price.

Paul Mason

*Teenagers From Outer Space* has been around for some time now, but R Talsorian are 'relaunching' it with a nice cover. The new version is unchanged from the original.

## Star Ratings

\*\*\*\*\*

First class game. Hall of Fame material

\*\*\*\*

A good game, even if the subject doesn't appeal to you

\*\*\*

Competent but nothing special

\*\*

Not recommended unless you're especially interested in the subject



A true turkey



Him: Looks of 5 and a Cool of 6. You haven't got a chance.



PETERSEN'S FIELD GUIDE TO  
**CREATURES OF  
 THE  
 DREAMLANDS**

DESIGNED BY  
 SANDY PETERSEN, LYNN  
 WILLIS, MARK J FERRARI &  
 TOM SULLIVAN

PUBLISHED BY  
 CHAOSIUM

PRICE £10.99

\*\*\*

Let's not beat about the bush. This is neither a *Call of Cthulhu* rule supplement or an adventure. What it is, is a text book on the inhabitants of the strange plane known as the Dreamlands. I use the phrase 'text book' with great care, for the volume is written as a handbook for students of 'medieval metaphysics' who may encounter these creatures in their travels. The main body of the book contains details on 26 denizens of the Dreamlands, each being given a full page of text containing such knowledge as is known to the Medieval Metaphysics De-

partment of the Miskatonic University, and a full page colour illustration. It is these illustrations that are the backbone of the product; Mr Ferrari's plates are quite beyond belief, with creatures ranging from the delicate and profoundly beautiful to the stark alien horror more usually associated with H P Lovecraft's writings. Beyond the A to Z of monsters the book contains little else: a flowchart to help hapless investigators identify the foes they encounter, and three pages of colour maps are the only other items worthy of note.

My final feelings on this book are mixed. As a great admirer of Lovecraft I cannot help but be impressed by the remarkable achievement of creating such wonderful painting as this volume contains, for they are truly something special. However, as a gamer, I have to say that this is of very little use in a *Call of Cthulhu* campaign. The colour maps of the Dreamlands are far more attractive than the ones included in the original Dreamlands supplement, but no more useful, while the only use for the colour illustrations is for the referee to be able to show the players exactly what they have encountered. While this is an excellent product with no faults whatsoever, ultimately merely a book for Lovecraft collectors and *Call of Cthulhu* completists.

Mike Jarvis

**DUNGEONEER**

DESIGNED BY  
 MARC GASCOIGNE & PETE  
 TAMLYN

PUBLISHED BY  
 PUFFIN

PRICE £3.99

\*\*\*

The most important thing to note above (if Marc and Pete will excuse me) is the price. Four quid for a 400 page rolegame puts this into an entirely different category of value than any of the opposition (until Joe Dever brings out the 'Lone Wolf' role playing game, that is). *Dungeoneer* is subtitled 'Advanced Fighting Fantasy', and develops Steve Jackson's *Fighting Fantasy Role-playing Game*. This will immediately be enough to put off most of you, but then the game isn't aimed at experienced rolegamers. It is designed to turn all those (c)onanistic solo

gamebook readers into imaginative role players, by using a cinematic analogy. 'Direct your friends . . .' is the way this book approaches the problem of refereeing. Throughout the book, cinematic terms are used to refer to game events. In some cases this is overdone, as the more technical film maker's jargon obscures the idea the authors are striving to convey. The style wavers somewhere between *Judge Dredd* and *Blue Peter*, though this could well be the fault of the editing.

But what of the rules themselves? Well, it's the *Fighting Fantasy* system with a few knobs on. Not elegant, not especially flexible, but simple, certainly. And sufficiently short that much of the book can be devoted to two scenarios. These lie within the *Fighting Fantasy* background, set in the heartland fantasy territory of Allansia. They follow on from each other, the first being a standard assault on a Wizard's Tower, presented as an introduction to the whole business of adventuring. The second has a slight connection with the early *FF* book *City of Thieves*, and it's clear that the game is going to work best with a bunch of players who have been through the solo

**CHARTS**

**Rolegames**

- ① AD&D 2nd Ed Monstrous Compendium (TSR)
- ② AD&D 2nd Ed Player's Handbook (TSR)
- ③ AD&D 2nd Ed Dungeon Master's Guide (West End)
- ④ Hardwired (Cyberpunk, R Talsorian)
- ⑤ Cyberpunk (R Talsorian)
- ⑥ REF 1 DM Screen (AD&D, TSR)
- ⑦ Soldier's Companion (Space: 1889, GDW)
- ⑧ City of Greyhawk (AD&D, TSR)
- ⑨ Dark Mage of Rhudaur (MERP, ICE)
- ⑩ Dawn of the Emperors (AD&D, TSR)

Chart supplied by Virgin Games.

books and got a good idea of the background.

Introductory rolegames tend to stress a straitjacket plotted approach (this also goes for the third *FF* rolegame book *The Riddling Reaver* which I had, ah, something to do with), presumably on the grounds that novice referees aren't going to be able to handle players deviating from the plot. In this case it's reasonably defensible, but I do question the wisdom of suggesting that referees design scenarios in which '... each scene introduce[s] a specific problem which must be solved before the Heroes can move on.' Sounds a little too much like those tedious computer games in which you spend hours working out which way to tweak the statue's ear to get to the next scene.

Still, at the price it's certainly a perfect means of introducing a *Fighting Fantasy* fan to the delights of proper role-playing. If you hanker after a return to the wild and woolly improvisational days of early D&D then you may find this appeals, but for my money it's one that's strictly for the kids.

Paul Mason



## CITIES FEATURE

# Tales of the City

## 3-D CITY PRODUCTS

There's a new term which has been spread around by those eager beavers at Games Workshop: '3-D Roleplay Hobby Game'. Apart from inspiring chortles from old cynics such as myself, the term has done little but make people realise that most rolegames were '3-D' anyway.

However, rolegamers increasingly seem to feel that their imaginations are insufficient to the task of conjuring up the fantasy world inhabited by their characters. To remedy this, miniatures are used in conjunction with a dazzling array of props.

**Warhammer Townscape** (Games Workshop) and **Cities of Mystery** (TSR) are two products which provide all you breakfast cereal/Blue Peter fanatics with cut out and stick together buildings. The latter also features large and colourful street plans on which to place your buildings.

There's not much more to be said about **Warhammer Townscape**. The buildings don't quite capture the baroque germanic feel of the **Warhammer** world, but they're close, and would certainly be appropriate for any fantasy game with reasonably late medieval technology.

The **Cities of Mystery** buildings are more primitive in style, and lack the detail of the **Warhammer** efforts, but they do come ready perforated. The pack also features city floor plans which might come in useful even if you're not prepared to assemble the buildings. Finally it also features a 64-page guide book on running city adventures which has a lot of merit. Though tending towards the 'random-table-to-determine-shopkeeper's-profession' end of things it explores most of the possibilities quite thoroughly.

*Paul Mason*

## WHISPERS OF THE NIGHT

*A generic scenario designed to introduce a group of player characters to a city, by Paul*

*Mason.*

This adventure is designed to be run with a group of players who are new to a city. The aim is to introduce them to the place in as dramatic a manner as possible. It is written with a fantasy setting in mind, but could equally well be applied to SF or modern settings. It is easier to use with a commercial city pack, since it relies on you allowing the player characters to go wherever they want within the city. If you don't use it with a commercial city pack you should either plan the place, or be prepared to improvise.

I envisage the scenario depending primarily on pace and paranoia. The player characters, through no fault of their own, are drawn into a situation where they have to rely on their wits to survive. From the start, however, they have a completely free choice of action. Thus you have an opportunity to allow them to roam the entire city, while nevertheless having a clear goal. Any 'encounter' that suggests itself (whether from tables in a commercial city pack or from your own warped imaginings) can take on a new significance given the background.

### INTRODUCTION

The characters have arrived in a city with which they are not familiar. Obviously if they are to achieve anything here they will need information and contacts. Shortly after they arrive they meet Arianne, a short, nervous young woman who appears to be a useful source of knowledge. Arianne speaks with a well

bred accent, and is quite insistent on talking to the characters. Don't feel you have to force the encounter with Arianne – let it take its natural course. If the player characters hit it off with her then she will provide a means of learning the political situation in the city, the best taverns and so on. However, she will be extremely reticent on the subject of her own background.

Arianne's motivation in attaching herself to the characters is simple – she has just left her lover, one of the foremost criminals in the city, and is both worried for her own safety and horribly depressed. She trusts the characters because they are complete strangers to the city and therefore unlikely to be involved in any way with her ex-lover, 'The Whisperer'. She will, however, firmly resist any kind of sexual advance from men.

Once the encounter with Arianne has provided you with sufficient entertainment and information, move on to the next stage. You can do this immediately if the player characters don't hit it off with Arianne, and prevent her from tagging along.

### ROSES AND RAZORS

The player characters are woken at dawn by a loud hammering at the door. Arianne is nowhere to be seen (assuming she was hanging around in the first place). The visitor is Ottau, a bull-necked lieutenant of the Whisperer. He is not subtle – and has achieved his current position by never allowing himself to be worried or out-faced by *anyone*. Even the Whisperer is careful not to argue with Ottau – the man can be ordered, but will never allow himself to lose face.

'Where is she?' he demands. Arianne was last seen with the player characters. Ottau will give nothing away, but will make it quite clear that he holds the characters responsible for Arianne's disappearance.

Ottau is a competent fighter, almost a match for the toughest member of the



party, and favours a long, razor-edged dagger. His clothing is well cut, but not noticeably extravagant, though his cuffs bear the device of a black rose (the Whisperer's sign). He is resourceful, but not unduly smart – never having encountered a truly cohesive group before, he believes that any number of people can be dealt with by taking out one key member.

Ottau will demand that the player characters accompany him in the search for Arianne. Their trip through hell begins here . . .

## PRYING EYES

Arianne, fearing for more than her life, and agonisingly alone, has fled to a deserted back alleyway not far from where the player characters are staying, and cut open her wrists. She lies amid the rubbish, a blood-splashed black rose by her side.

The Whisperer is desperate to get her back, and knows that the player characters were the last people to have been seen talking to her. Spies are common throughout the city, as the player characters may soon discover.

If Arianne's body is discovered, the Whisperer will be out to get the last people to have seen her. If nothing else, it's a matter of preserving face. Somebody in the position of the Whisperer can't afford to be seen to be weak. Protestations, or even absolute proof, of innocence will be in vain.

Possibilities at this stage include being dragged before the Whisperer straight away or, (more likely given the way most player characters behave) fleeing into the city, possibly killing Ottau on the way. Here is an opportunity for the player characters to explore thoroughly the seamy underside of the city.

You might like to decide before you run the game some prominent individuals who are prepared to help or shelter the player characters from the Whisperer's agents. Equally, there may well be some people who are definitely going to betray them. For the rest, a rule of thumb might be that any individual has a 25% chance of betraying the player characters to the Whisperer, a 60% chance of simply being a scared citizen who wants nothing to do with such intrigues, and a 15% chance of being prepared to help.

The characters will have to deal with the Whisperer's assassins tracking them down through the city, and plots involving drugging, kidnap, blackmail and

even magic. The most important thing is to keep up the pace. Don't allow the players time to plan at leisure: just as they seem to have found themselves a cosy hide hole thanks to that kindly old man they met behind the tavern, they overhear a muted conversation between him and a showy, cloaked figure, in which phrases like 'It's them, all right,' and 'Don't worry, I'll deal with 'em tonight' can just be made out.

## ON THE RUN

The player characters may decide to seek help from the authorities. The problem here is, what can they do? They're not prepared to offer protection to any bunch of travellers who happen to feel nervous, and they don't have any leads to follow.

The Whisperer is not the only criminal leader in the city, of course. It's possible, depending on their actions, that the player characters might fall into the clutches or seek assistance from some rival. Here is safety of a sort. As a symbol of the Whisperer's weakness, the player characters are useful, and they *could* exploit the situation to their advantage. However, other criminal leaders will have power plays and intrigues of their own. Getting involved with the underworld of a city is a risky business.

## NEVERENDING STORY

Who or what is the Whisperer? A recurring villain is a useful device to have around, and a *mysterious* recurring villain is even better. I've deliberately avoided a description so that you can tailor the character to fit what you want to play. It may be that there are characters already set up in a commercial city pack who fit the bill.

For what it's worth, I'd envisaged her as a lady-in-waiting at the city ruler's palace, who controlled her agents by keeping her identity secret, meeting them in a dark room and whispering orders in a deep, unnerving voice. More extravagant possibilities (such as being a non-human) might appeal more. The Whisperer's lackeys will be the same

# Ars Magica

## The Art of Magic

Winner of the Gamer's Choice Award at Origins 88.  
The most up to date mediaeval role-playing system.  
Simple mechanics apply elegantly to most situations.  
Elevates Magic from dull rote-work to a creative Art.  
Emphasises cooperation, role-play and storytelling.  
Abandons the modern, rational, technological approach.  
It is spiritual, allegorical, uncertain, eldritch.

Ars Magica places the Art of Magic at your command.

Now available: 2nd edition rules, plus 'jump-start' adventure  
The Storm Rider.

Ars Magica 2nd edition £14  
The Storm Rider scenario £6  
Broken Covenant scenario £5.

Look out for Ars Magica in your local games shop or order  
direct from:

Spike's Games  
PO Box 37  
21 Nicholas St  
York YO1 1UG

Add £1.50 P&P per order

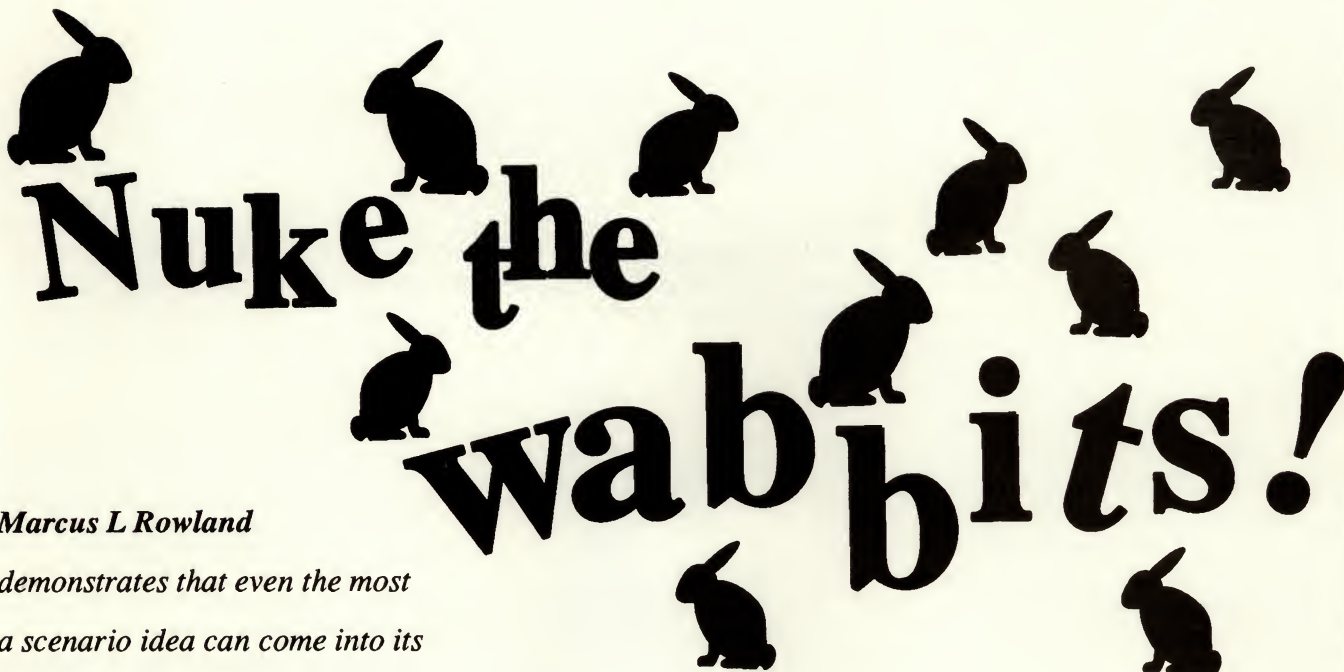
whatever, since bully boys and small-time criminals tend to be the same wherever you find them.

The main problem with this scenario is that the obvious let out for the player characters is simply to leave the city and never return. Wouldn't that be a shame? Well it might not be that simple. After all, the Whisperer will be watching the town gates and may even have bribed the guardsmen who man them. A touch of bureaucratic nightmare wouldn't do any harm at all, particularly if you spring the old 'Hey you, come back here a minute' trick on the player characters *after* they've passed through the gates. If the player characters had a good reason for coming to the city in the first place (meet someone, find an object, conduct trade, propose a political alliance) then there's no problem. They will face the challenge of achieving their goal while being hunted down by a gangster.

## SOURCE

This scenario was inspired by a description of the plot of Scorcese's *After Hours*. Watching the film might provide further ideas to throw at your players. G





# Nuke the wabbits!

*Marcus L Rowland*

*demonstrates that even the most a scenario idea can come into its own when transplanted to another game.*

If you run rolegames it pays to be flexible. Sometimes you get an idea that seems good, but just doesn't work with your favourite game system. There's an answer to this problem; think of every other game system you know, and see if it will work better with another system's background. Nine times out of ten you'll find that the idea is improved by a change.

The reason for this is simple. Most people's minds (especially mine!) are incurably lazy. When you first think of an idea, it's natural to take the easy path. If you have an idea with fantasy elements, you'll probably try to fit it into a fantasy frame, an SF idea into an SF frame. The trouble is that your subconscious may have been working on a completely different track, and spawned the original idea as a by-product of something completely different and a lot more interesting, a half-formed idea which is forgotten as soon as you start work. Once you reject the obvious idea, the deeper idea is free to surface. Two examples from my own writing; *Queen Victoria And The Holy Grail* (Golden Heroes) started out as notes for a *Call of Cthulhu* adventure, and *To Live And Die In Megacity One* (Judge Dredd) was originally written for *Golden Heroes*. Neither worked in its original form, and both were greatly improved by translation to another system.

To prove the point, here's a synopsis of the most obscurely unsellable scenario I ever wrote, with notes on conversion to some other rolegame systems.

## NIGHTMARE PARK: A BUNNIES AND BURROWS CAMPAIGN

A group of rabbits (the player characters) are rescued from a research laboratory by animal rights activists, who intend to release them in the countryside. The car breaks down while crossing a city park on the way out of town, and the activists decide to release the rabbits before the police or park keepers arrive and see their furry cargo.

The rabbits were used in an experiment on nicotine addiction, and suffer withdrawal symptoms if they fail to eat some tobacco every day. They do not know that they are addicted, and can only identify tobacco by its smell – it was normally mixed with their food. They are totally unfamiliar with any natural environment.

The rabbits must survive, learn to cope with the strange new world they encounter, and find other rabbits for mating and support. In the long term, they want to escape from the park and reach the countryside they remember from their mothers' legends.

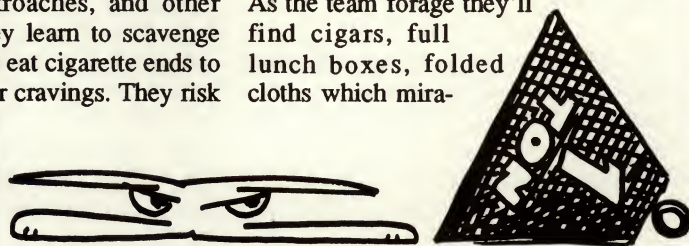
As the rabbits explore the park, they encounter hostile park keepers, punks, BMWs, rats, cockroaches, and other urban wildlife. They learn to scavenge from litter bins, and eat cigarette ends to satisfy their peculiar cravings. They risk deadly traps, some set by the park keepers, others (such as a dangerously polluted

canal) an accidental byproduct of urban life. If they continue to explore they'll eventually meet Lop-Ear, a rabbit from the countryside, who can lead them to relative safety if they are brave enough to follow.

Unless you're a *Bunnies and Burrows* player, the epic scope of this synopsis will mean little to you. The fact that the adventure ran to several thousand words (including four separate encounter tables, a random dropped litter and narcotics table, and special rules on nicotine addiction) will probably appall you. However, it's almost always possible to boil an adventure idea down to a few paragraphs. Once you've done that, you can try twisting it around; for example . . .

## Toon

Use the basic situation described for *Bunnies & Burrows*. The player characters are rabbits (or other laboratory animals such as rats, mice, etc.). They are carrying the usual balls of string, Margaret Thatcher masks, and so on. The park keepers and other non player characters are the opposition – stupid, clumsy, but with a knack of stopping them from getting out of the park, and materialising with shotguns whenever they find meals. As the team forage they'll find cigars, full lunch boxes, folded cloths which mira-





culously unwrap to reveal four-course meals with candelabra, and the like. Escape tunnels always end up under the canal, in the park keepers lodge, and so on. Rabbits that reach the street are hit by cars and flung back over the wall of the park, run down by trains, grabbed by punks and used as balls in games of touch football that somehow end up in the park, and so on.

Continue these activities until the pace flags, then let the animals escape and get back to the laboratory, where the scientists chase them with dissecting instruments and chainsaws. Ideally this should end with the scientists trapped in the cages, coughing and spluttering as they inhale the concentrated smoke of hundreds of cigarettes, while the animals take notes and prepare ever more fiendish experiments.

If the team decide that they like things more in the park, and stop trying to escape, escalate the violence of the keepers, and end up with a huge battle which leaves the animals controlling the park and the keepers hiding down holes. Think of Yogi Bear and Top Cat and you won't go far wrong.

## Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

The team are relaxing at home one night, and hear a soft scratching noise at the door. Someone presumably opens it; a cute little white rabbit, covered in bloodstains, hops in, says 'In the park! They're killing uuuurrgghhh . . .' and collapses.

There's only one park in the area. A few hours ago animal liberationists rescued twelve mutant rabbits from the laboratories of a company secretly owned by Dr Feral (see various *TMNT* scenarios), and were forced to abandon them in the park after a car chase and gun battle. Now the park has been flooded with Ferals' agents, posing as FBI men, who are running an all out capture or kill operation. Already five of the rabbits are prisoners, two are dead. The park contains a dozen or so of Feral's troopers, plus a few of his war-animals and robots; for example, a remote controlled anaconda, a pack of cyborg rats, and so forth. Many more patrol the perimeter. Feral and the captured rabbits are in a van inside the park, near the park keeper's lodge.

The rabbits are clones, and are telepathic among themselves but can't contact other minds. They have a limited empathic ability; they can sense friendly minds. When all their minds are linked their intelligence exceeds human norms, but each dead or unconscious rabbit reduces

their abilities. In all other respects they are normal rabbits. In a campaign they may be a little too useful, as intelligent self-replicating communications equipment; it may be advisable to say that they are sterile and have short life spans.

Once the rabbits are rescued, the team may want to take out Feral's lab and find out more about his plans; this is beyond the scope of this adventure.



## Judge Dredd

++ ITEM 32 ++ VERMIN ++

'MAC reports a serious increase in the number of rabbits infesting our local park. These cute little animals have been linked to a dozen different communicable diseases, and various allergies. It's an open-air site, so we can't use Rodentine gas, and the keepers aren't allowed to carry weapons. Now, the park's a place for quiet relaxation, and we don't want to spoil things. I'm assigning [the team] to deal with this problem. You'll go in on foot, and take them out with these pneumo-guns, and these special gas grenades which can be used in burrows. Try not to upset the public; you'll remember the fuss when Judge Dredd took out that gribbly with a high-ex shot on prime-time vid . . .'

The Judges are issued with air pistols (range 20 metres, -1 effect modifier, darts are coated with rabbit-specific toxin) and are sent into the park to kill some cute little rabbits. The park is on the city bottom, in the permanent shadow of huge blocks, and the canal is fenced-off and so heavily polluted that it'll dissolve metal. Fortunately the team are allowed to carry their normal weapons too; fortunately, because the rabbits have been inhaling the fumes from the canal, and are heavily mutated. Think of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and *Night of the Lepus* . . . They have been killing citizens and dumping the bones in the canal. Try to trap the Judges well away from the park

entrances, and on foot, when the furry hordes start to close in.

**Killer Rabbit** S 2 I 35 CS 25  
25% armour (matted fur) all areas, razor sharp fangs with +2 effect modifiers, rabbits can jump up to 10 metres, maximum height 5m. Immune to Stumm gas and all normal tranquilising agents, but not Rodentine, war gasses, and so on. They are affected by the poison darts, but at least two penetrating hits are needed to kill a rabbit.

This is essentially a short scenario; the team can soon get help, and an H-Wagon can sterilise the park. You can complicate it by having a few hundred citizens in the park when the rabbits run amok.

## Ghostbusters

There's a leak in the team's ectoplasmic containment vessel, and an unknown quantity of raw PKE energy has escaped into the sewers. Use of the Ectomobiles' extra-sensitive PKE detector shows that the energy emerged in a canal which runs through a nearby park. As they get out of the car, they see dozens of cute semi-transparent green bunny rabbits gambolling on the lawn, and moving menacingly towards the park-keeper's hut. The team have two goals; to round up these manifestations, and to avoid admitting any responsibility for the sudden supernatural outbreak!

The PKE has energised the spirits of all the bunnies killed by the park keepers over the last few decades. There are about ten for each ghostbuster, or more if you feel sadistic. Each has Ectopresence 1, Power 1. However, two or more can merge together. If enough merge they increase ectopresence and power (+1 Ectopresence per 5 rabbits, +1 Power per 10 rabbits seems about right, with a maximum of 20 Ectopresence, 10 Power).







Distributed in the UK by TM Games, Chart House, Station Road, East  
Preston, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN16 3AG. ☎ (0903) 773170.



The small rabbitoids only have two special powers; they can Slime victims, and can reproduce extremely rapidly. Unless the team can trick them into forming a single giant rabbit and force it into a ghost trap, they'll never get rid of all of them. Unfortunately the giant sized rabbits have a few more special powers (materialisation, poltergeist, and control mind seem nicely silly). Of course some form of Weird Science may be able to solve the problem; there's the legend of the pied piper, and the team undoubtedly have a lot of old hi-fi parts around . . .

### Call Of Cthulhu, GURPS Horror

For once things seem quiet, and an investigator is spending a relaxing afternoon in the local park. As he lies on the grass, a cute little white bunny rabbit hops towards him, eating crumbs from the grass – and suddenly sinks its sharp fangs into his hand. There's a moment of disorientating nausea, then the adventurer finds that he has changed into a rabbit, while the rabbit has turned into a nauseating shape-changing manifestation of the supernatural. As the horrified rabbit watches, the appalling form twists and folds until it is an exact replica of the original adventurer, then strolls off towards his home.

The problem; how is the adventurer going to warn his friends and recover his own body before it's too late.

If this plot doesn't appeal, remember that Doraphobia is fear of fur. You should be able to do something with it! The Bunnies from Yuggoth?

### Teenagers From Outer Space

Some rabbits have escaped from the high-school lab, and one of the alien students has an idea that they may have eaten some fairly exotic chemicals.

The team are already in serious trouble with the school authorities, and one more act of wholesale property damage may mean suspension or expulsion.

Does anyone remember Kitten Kong?

### SF systems

Set the adventure on an alien planet. The rabbits are a native species, apparently unintelligent but actually very advanced, with immense psionic powers. They have evolved beyond crass reliance upon machines, and prefer to spend their lives contemplating the Cosmic All, the Beingness of Carrots, or some other metaphysical concept. Unfortunately

they tend to pay little attention to their physical surroundings while engaged in contemplation, and several have been killed and eaten by the hungry colonists. The team land on the planet, somehow learn the truth, and must persuade the colonists to stop killing the rabbits, before the rabbits decide to combine their psionic powers and detonate the brains of every human on the planet.

### Fantasy systems

The team are hired as hunters to rid the city park of its vermin – run this as the *Judge Dredd* adventure above, with appropriate weaponry and statistics.

### Superhero games

As *Teenagers from Outer Space*, except the rabbits have escaped from the team's labs.

### Paranoia

'Greetings, Citizens. Traitorous commie mutant members of certain secret societies have released animals from Outside in the sector pseudo-park. These dangerous killer rodents must be eliminated immediately. Collect your weapons from the armoury, and special equipment from R&D. Have a nice day-cycle.'

The team should be equipped with the usual assortment of useless junk, plus a few weapons specially chosen for effectiveness against rabbits (crucifixes, stakes, and a few tak-nukes seem about right). They are opposed by Sierra Club fanatics, with a similar array of weaponry. Meanwhile the mutant rabbits the traitors introduced have found cable ducts leading into the bowels of The Computer, and are preparing to re-program and convert the Alpha Complex into the Alpha Warren . . .

### Espionage games

'Good Afternoon, Mr Briggs. This afternoon animal rights activists entered our city laboratory and stole twelve rabbits. Unknown to the activists, a stolen microdot containing vital missile blueprints was concealed in a capsule strapped to the leg of one of the rabbits. The activists were forced to abandon the rabbits in the city park.

'Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to recover the microdot. The traitor who concealed the microdot has already been apprehended; under interrogation he has revealed that the KGB are already looking for the capsule. You must not let the capsule fall into KGB hands,



and must avoid any publicity. This tape will self destruct in ten seconds.'

The team (equipped with all the silly gadgetry you care to inflict upon them) must recover the rabbits and fight the KGB in a city park without attracting any attention. The rabbits are essentially innocent bystanders, unless you want to turn them into mutants, as in the *Judge Dredd* adventure above, or infect them with some bio-war horror.

### Warhammer 40K

'Fellow Space Marines, we have learned that there is a manifestation of chaos on our own planet, indeed, in our very base! Strange furry creatures have been seen in

### COMING UP IN THE GI ROLEGAME SECTION:

To complete the cities feature, we look at *Minas Tirith*, *Haven*, *City-State of the Invincible Overlord*, *The City of Greyhawk*, *the City of Middenheim*, and the *CityBooks*.

In later issues we'll be covering the European rolegaming scene, including an interview with the designers of *Das Schwarze Auge*. We'll be moving on to science fiction rolegames, with an update on what's happening in the world of cyberpunk.

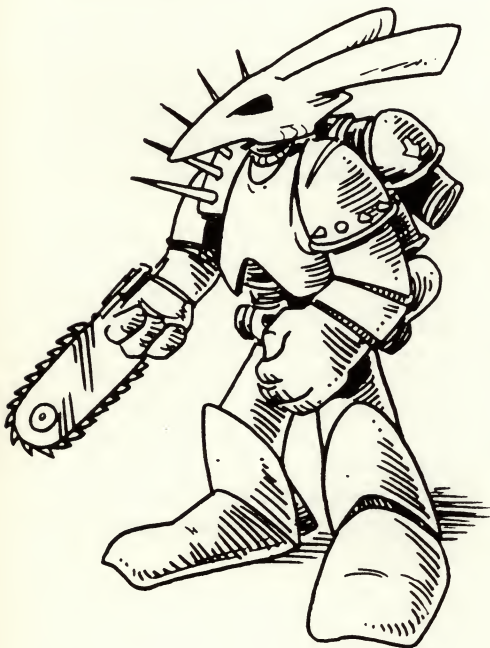
For the future we'll be covering superhero games, wacky games and exclusive details on cult favourite *Empire of the Petal Throne*.



the gardens of our beloved temple, the Shrine Of Total Subjugation To The Emperor And Contemplation Of Appalling Terminal Injury, and our Adeptus Zoologicus bio-technicians have recognised them as dangerously mutated Old Terran life forms.

'Kill the mutant rabbits. Obliterate the park. Destroy the city. Raze the continent, detonate the local sun, implode the entire galaxy, aarrgh, chaos death spikes bludgeon kill maim chainsaws hack destroy . . . my brain hurts.'

The rabbits use the same statistics as gene stealers, Adeptus Titanicus war-bots, or whatever else seems appropriate. Remember that this is NOT an official Games Workshop approved scenario – they don't sell chaos death mutant rabbit figures (yet).



## Sources

The original **Bunnies and Burrows** adventure was written for the fanzine *Trollcrusher* in 1984, and is scheduled to appear in the next issue 'real soon now'. All material related to games other than **Bunnies and Burrows** has been written specially for this publication.

The briefing for the Secret Agent outline was suggested by a *Mission Impossible* adventure by Matt Harrison and Dave Murray, run at Koancon in 1987.

See also: *The Goodies – Kitten Kong* and *Big Bunny* episodes. *Top Cat*, *Bugs Bunny*, etc. *Night of the Lepus*. G

# ROLE • CALL

**Paul Mason**

Many years ago there was a thing called Games Day. Five odd (in some cases very odd) thousand gamers would congregate in the hallowed sanctuary of the Royal Horticultural Society's hall in order to wander round and stare at the various displays, buy games from the stalls or prop up the appallingly over-priced bar.

Although everyone I knew hated the venue, the bar prices, the commercialism and anything else they could spare a dose of vitriol for, they agreed that it was a fine opportunity for gamers to get together. The fanzine stand used to provide a little light amusement, and in the later years there was even some excitement to be had from talks and seminars arranged in the smaller rooms.

Now that Games Day in this form is no more, we can see how fragmented the role-playing games hobby has become. In the past there was a community of people in contact with each other who were united by enthusiasm for role-games. Now there is a community of people who are in contact with each other who are united by enthusiasm for Games Workshop products. It would be stupid for me to slag off Games Workshop, since they do what they do so very well, but I regret the passing of a noble institution.

This leaves us with the smaller conventions. Personally I enjoy a small residential convention far more than a large commercial exhibition. TSR's Games Fair has done sterling service for the past few years, although its events are rather limited if you don't like AD&D. In the early days it provided a chance for us lowly fanzine editors to worship at the feet of our idol, Gary Gyax, the fanzine editor's most stolid supporter. Since then it has provided a relaxing weekend with the emphasis firmly where it belongs – on gaming – though at a rather inflated price.

Inspired partly by Games Fair, and partly by SF conventions such as Novacon, the now deceased Koancon created a unique atmosphere. I was privileged to be involved in a minor capacity in the organisation of this con, and found it highly rewarding. The 'Tournaments' – *Wacky Races/Toon* in the first year, *Mission Impossible* in the second, and *Movie Mania* in the third – will not soon be forgotten by those who took part in them. However, the principal organisers of Koancon have moved on to other things, and the various promises of attendees to organise similar events have come to nothing. Which leaves us with two independent conventions in 1990 that I know of: *Wottacon*, organised by the Guild of Melee and Magic, and *Conjunction*, organised by some SF fans familiar with the requirements of this type of con.

*Wottacon* promises to be a more commercial affair, with no accommodation, but trade stands, guests of honour (including Joe 'Ubiquitous' Dever and Jon 'Who the hell's he?' Sutherland) and a range of activities embracing the broad swath of role-playing games (in other words, people in furry leg warmers hitting each other with rubber swords).

*Conjunction* will also have a guest of honour, the rather more worthwhile Greg Stafford, designer of some of the better role-games to be published in the past decade. *Conjunction* will also feature live role-playing, but promises to be full of other events: talks, seminars, games and so on. It will be residential, though this obviously makes it a more expensive proposition.

Both of these conventions are important. They enable rolegamers to encounter new styles, to see different games in action, and above all, to have fun. I hope you will attend if you possibly can. We should do whatever we can to ensure that they are successful and that more spring up. Good conventions are the sign of a healthy hobby. G



## REVIEW

## COMPUTER | GAMES

TV SPORTS  
FOOTBALLDESIGNED BY  
LARRY GARNERPUBLISHED BY  
MIRRORSOFT

PRICE £24.95

Game Play: \*\*\*\*

Graphics: \*\*\*\*

*Available for the Amiga and the Atari ST.  
Reviewed on the Amiga.*

Terrific! At last someone has managed to computerise my favourite role-playing game!

Being a fanatical *Dungeons & Dragons* player for some years now, it came as a great surprise to find a computer simulation that accurately reflected the true spirit of the original rolegame. Mirrorsoft have plucked the game from its more traditional fantasy setting and placed it in a far more terrifying and bewildering universe – modern America.

## NOTHING SPARED

Unhindered by tedious bookkeeping and messy character generation, you are given charge of 11 deeply disturbed warriors with which to inflict maximum damage on your opposing 'team'. As with original *Dungeons & Dragons*, players are free to roam about large expanses of ground maiming and mutilating. No detail has been spared: even the Dungeon Master appears from time to time to break up the more dishonourable exchanges. One slight quibble I had was the limited use of magical artefacts. A small, oddly shaped bladder filled with air hardly seemed worth fighting over. But as I soon discovered, possession of this relic attracted considerable attention from the other 'team'.

The rules are mercifully short. Fans of the original scenario will appreciate its attention to detail. Team statistics for each player and team are updated during play, and seasonal campaigns can be fought against up to 27 rival clans (player or computer controlled). But despite this wealth of statistics, the game is joystick controlled and surprisingly easy to pick up. The graphics are, well, graphic, and the assorted grunts and groans punctuate the crowd noises perfectly. Practice games allow you time to perfect the various offensive and defensive plays before the humiliation of the first match. Should you need someone to blame for your gross errors of judgement, the computer allows two players to play together as quarterback and receiver respectively. In practice, joint teams lead to serious off-screen violence, so fight your battles alone.

## COMPUTER CALL

The play option format, passing technique and movement is remarkably similar to a cartridge once available for the IntelVision system – that pre-Bros dinosaur of game machines. The computer plays in real time, and keeps the game running at a brisk pace. Your team is never perfect, and has to rely on its strengths and defend its weaknesses. Should you fail to call moves during play, it will decide for you, basing moves on your style of play. (After conceding 60 points in the first quarter, I sat back and watched the computer take over my team and lead a spirited fight back, only to fall apart again when I took up the controls once more.)

How best to describe the game? Well, it certainly isn't chess, as the TV presenters would have you believe. I used to play chess after school and never once inflicted multiple fractures on anyone. Then again, naked aggression is about as effective as your average American defence policy. So a fair description of the game would be as follows: Speed Chess, poker, Napoleonic and pillow fighting. Have I made myself clear?

Even when the basic set plays have been absorbed, the writers have allowed

enough flexibility for play variations giving you virtually complete control over the team, and very few excuses for failure. After a good deal of effort, words like 'Blitz', 'Bomb' and 'Hail Mary' will assume a new significance. Do real life rough'n'tough players really sit in steamy locker rooms discussing Flair Patterns? I doubt it somehow.

## TALKING HEADS

Throughout the carnage, there are brief interludes of TV-style animated sequences in which strangely lifelike sports personalities mouth the comments on the game in play. Mercifully this window dressing can be skipped in most cases, speeding up play considerably.

Another annoying point for those less well endowed than your reviewer: disk swapping! Yes, there's plenty of this going on during play. In terms of realism this unfortunate procedure has roughly the same effect as condoms have to sexual spontaneity. TV, Sports and Football made me buy that liberating second drive, and for those willing to pay out nearly £30 for the software in these debt ridden times, the luxury of another drive must make sense.

So, prepare to lose your preconceptions about a game that has for too long been shown over-enthusiastic marketing and outrageous hype. Simple but subtle, American Football is a game that needs time to fully appreciate it fully. Despite the years of Channel 4 coverage, it was *TV Sports Football* that finally untangled those frantic melees.

At last, it all makes sense . . .

*Ernesto Williams*

*We understand that the ST version omits the stats game.*



# FIRE BRIGADE

DESIGNED BY  
DAVE O'CONNOR & TONY  
OLIVER

PUBLISHED BY  
PANTHER GAMES/  
ELECTRONIC ARTS

PRICE £29.95

Game Play: \*\*\*\*\*

Graphics: \*\*\*

*Available for the Amiga, IBM, Mac, and Apple IIGS. Reviewed on the Amiga.*

Fire Brigade is the rather curious title of a strategic level computer simulation of the Battle of Kiev, fought on the Eastern Front in the Second World War. Designed and programmed by the Panther Games company from Australia, the pre-production game was first unveiled to rapturous fans two years ago and was given 'state of the art' accolades. The difference in this case is that, unusually, they were fully deserved. However, as is often the way with 'real soon now' software, development time ballooned, conversions took longer than expected and until recently there was no UK distributor, which all resulted in the game only appearing in the UK in the last few weeks.

Fire Brigade comes in the usual plastic box and has, aside from the single disk and game aids, an excellent eighty page manual. This is needed to explain the two game levels available, tutorial and advanced, which it achieves very well. The tutorial scenario supplied is quite short and all action with a limited number of rules, units and combat options. It is possible to be playing the tutorial after reading a few pages of the rulebook but the learning curve gets pretty steep from there on in. The advanced game introduces all sorts of features like hidden units, air support and superiority, intelligence, reinforcements, supply and fatigue. Three scenarios are provided which last between four and eight hours, though of course they will often finish much quicker than this and there is a save game option anyway.

A notable aspect of Fire Brigade is that Panther have taken the brave design step of casting off all the unnecessary constraints of traditional hex boardgames. I

have never understood the reasons for using on-screen hexes when they simply aren't needed in a well designed computer game. Hexes clutter the screen, make the already weak graphics look far worse, do nothing to aid realistic movement or facing and perpetuate the feeling that the program is nothing more than a straight lift from a boardgame. Fire Brigade neatly dodges all these problems by portraying the area around Kiev as a normal map which has commendably clear detail. Additionally, Panther supply a card map giving the overall view of the sector. The divisional unit markers are overlaid neatly on the screen map and the combined effect is not dissimilar to a field commander's operations chart.

Fire Brigade aims to put the players in the position of a general or field marshal, with the emphasis firmly on command. It is possible to play either the Russian or the German side and solitaire or two player options are provided. The feel of the game is of being in overall control of a 'front' without knowledge of the enemy's true positions or strengths; thus the fog of war feel is excellent. It is possible to get involved with ordering each unit or simply to monitor the whole front from intelligence reports.

At the start of each game 'day' it is usual to check on your troop numbers and morale. Then, using the mouse, each divisional HQ unit is given 'general' orders such as attacking specific units or towns, or defending. Having issued commands to all units, the game resolves all the movement and combat. This all happens dynamically on the screen and, while one is powerless to change events, it is fascinating to watch it all unfold. Armoured divisions make breakthroughs and drive deep behind enemy lines, infantry divisions stand immovable and the seemingly ever present SS and Russian Guards threaten when those holes open in the lines. The computer plays a decent game and there are no signs of 'cheating'. The feel of the game is excellent and can be frustrating for all the right reasons, although it is sometimes difficult to see exactly why certain things happen.

The only complaints I have relate specifically to the Amiga version. The problem is with speed, both of disk access and screen functions. The worst factor is load time which takes the best part of ten minutes from initial boot-up to being ready to play. This is unacceptable, even allowing for the Amiga's inherently slow disk access. The speed of screen updates could also be quicker. Additionally, it often seems very difficult to actually give a unit an instruction, especially when

## CHARTS

### Computer Games

- ① Red Lightning (SSI)
- ② Storm Across Europe (SSI)
- ③ Rommel (SSG)
- ④ Starfleet 2 (Interstel: import)
- ⑤ Pirates (Microprose)
- ⑥ Sword of Aragon (SSI)
- ⑦ Curse of the Azure Bonds (SSI/TSR)
- ⑧ Waterloo (PSS/Mirrorsoft)
- ⑨ Fire Brigade (Panther/Mindscape)
- ⑩ Sword of Twilight (Electronic Arts)

*Chart supplied by Strategic Plus Software, PO Box 8, Hampton, Middx TW12 3XA.*

changing from another type of command. However, I heard on the Origins grapevine that Panther are aware of these shortcomings and are re-programming various parts of the game so we may see an official upgrade soon.

In conclusion, aside from the minor gripes, I have no hesitation in confirming Fire Brigade's 'State of the Art' position in the market. It manages to absorb the basic tenets of boardgames into a very smooth, workable environment using the mouse, icons and menus. It then adds features at which computers excel such as limited intelligence and, for once, makes it all work together. Overall, there are enough features and neat ideas in the game to make it the benchmark standard for a good while to come, which is not to say it is last word in Second World War games; I hope there will be improved systems with better graphics and scope from both Panther and other companies. What is important for now is that Fire Brigade offers plenty of fascinating depth as a game system and creates something of a watershed in simulation design.

*Mike Siggins*



# MAIN BATTLE TANK: WEST GERMANY

DESIGNED BY  
STEVE NEWBERG

PUBLISHED BY  
SIMULATIONS CANADA

PRICE £40

No graphics as such.

Game Play: \*\*\*\*

Available for the IBM PC. Supplied by  
Strategic Plus Software.

Some years ago, Simulations Canada gave up on traditional boardgames and switched production over to computer simulations. To those of you familiar with their boardgames it will be obvious that this was a smart move. I gather that success and critical acclaim have been easier to come by in the computer game market. **Main Battle Tank (MBT)** is the latest simulation from this prolific company and, despite the high price, it is a game worthy of your time.

**MBT** is, as you might expect, a simulation of company level armour tactics in modern day Germany. There are several varied scenarios supplied, most of which give the one or two human players the chance to command a force composed of tanks, heavy weapons and sometimes attack helicopters. The player gets the choice of either side and whether to play against the computer, which plays rather well, or another human. It is also possible to let the computer play itself. Unusual, but quite useful to see how the game develops. There are numerous options available within the scenarios so the game offers plenty of play value and if you exhaust these, there is a 'design your own' option.

## GAME CONTROLLER

**MBT** is the classic board/computer game hybrid. In this type of game, the program supplied on disk is usually entirely text based and acts as the game 'controller'. The program accepts parameters and orders from the players, often through menus, and responds with text information (using grid co-ordinates) which is

marked onto one of the two maps provided. This done with counters or, in this case, chinagraph pencils. The board monitors the position of your forces and the suspected or confirmed locations of the enemy gleaned from reports issued by the computer. The advantage of this system is that the designer does not have to worry about on screen graphics or map scrolling code and the large amounts of memory they use. This free space is made available to the program thus allowing more sophisticated text routines. It also means you can go to town on the map graphics which will always be better than their on-screen equivalent. The drawbacks are that text displays seem a bit old-hat these days and that it is essential to watch the screen closely to see what is going on. Personally, I find this approach quite acceptable and preferable to poor screen graphics every time.

## OPERATIONS MANUAL

Because of the hybrid approach, **MBT's** components are pretty sparse. There is one disk, a short 'rule' book with some designer's notes, two high quality plastic covered boards and two pencils. That's it. The real meat of the game is on the disk – a chunky 176K of program that runs very quickly and which seems bug free and crash proof. The rule book is a misnomer really, it is more a guide to playing the game and explaining what all the codes and menu choices mean. Perhaps manual would be a better term.

Simulations Canada are big fans of the limited intelligence game and the idea behind **MBT** is to put the player in the commander's seat. The typical scenario starts with choice of friendly forces and deployment. After that, you give your units suitable orders and wait for the action to start. If you are defending, pretty soon the radio waves begin to crackle with reports of enemy sightings. Outposts of your forces come under attack and they try to send radio messages back to HQ. Where possible they try to state the composition of the enemy force. This would all be fine if the radios worked all the time and the information were reliable. Nothing is ever that easy. Units can exaggerate reports and radio messages can be jammed, distorted or just fail to appear at all. This is what makes the game so fascinating – you never know exactly what is going on.

As the battle develops, your companies call in for reinforcements and you are given reports on how your helicopters and forces are getting on. The status reports are very useful and advise just how tired the troops are, what their morale is

and whether they are low on ammo or just plain knocked about. The action tends to be stop-start in nature as you defend frantically, hopefully drive the Russian horde back and then it all goes quiet, only for the assault to start somewhere else. The feel is excellent as you rush round and try to plug the gaps in the line. Reserves are essential here, as is the timing of their commitment.

This sequence carries on until either side packs it in or achieves the victory point level. This usually happens after about an hour or 90 minutes but game saves are possible if required. It is also possible to end a game prematurely and then see who is winning at that point. When the game is over, there is a neat section called the post mortem which shows troop performance and gives a resumé of events.

**MBT** is a very good game as long as you are not one of these gamers who likes to see and know everything that is going on. The action can be *very* confusing at times and, playing as NATO, you will often be extremely outnumbered – in fact, just like the real thing. The feel of the *Fog of War* is excellent. For these reasons, it is a hard game to play well. Games tend to be short and deadly and require intense concentration. The maps quickly get filled with red arrows and markings as units retreat and counterattack. My only tip learned so far is to keep your HQ units on the move as if the enemy locates them, you get creamed.

## LIMITED INTELLIGENCE

Simulations Canada have probably got the balance spot on in **MBT**. It is an interesting game and is some way down the road toward the 'ultimate' command control simulator. For me, it recalls fine games such as **Dneipr River Line** (Avalon Hill) and Simcan's own **Long Lance**, both of which used a similar limited intelligence system and worked well. The program is well written, the game plays quickly and I enjoyed playing the game a lot. I think to get the best out of the game one would need to be more knowledgeable about the subject matter, but it still represents a notable challenge for gamers with a fringe interest; even I can tell a company of attacking T80s is not good for my future health. My only gripe, as ever, is the price. The component cost of the game is minimal and £40 is a lot to hand over for development costs. Nevertheless, **MBT** is a very good game and should be an essential purchase for the modern period gamer.

*Mike Siggins*



## BACKGAMMON

PROGRAMMED BY  
BRAY RESEARCH

PUBLISHED BY  
ATARI (UK) LTD

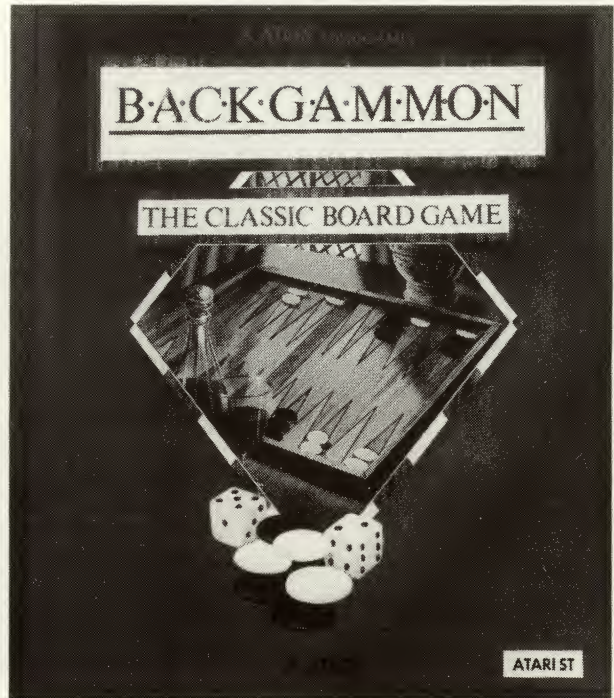
PRICE £24.99

men from the bar against a five point board. Perhaps this success went to its memory, for in the next game it redoubled me to four when it again had two blots on the bar attempting to come in against a five point home board, and a five point prime. When it failed to enter either blot, I could have played on for a gammon, but I figured that having offered such a ludicrous double, it would have to accept my redouble as the position had barely changed. Needless to say, it passed. The rest of the match followed the same pattern; a sequence of solid play followed by a catastrophic error. In the end I ran out a comfortable 13-7 winner. The second match was closer; 13-12, mainly thanks to the machine's uncanny ability to roll doubles when bearing off (a traditional moan). A small step for mankind then, but no steps at all for high technology.

### THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

It's difficult to see whom this program is aimed at. For one thing, the concept of having different skill levels is fatally flawed at the outset. In backgammon, unlike chess, there are only two kinds of moves: good ones, and bad ones. 'Different skill levels' don't come into it. By playing at a lower level you'd simply be picking up bad habits. Even at the top level the machine commits some unforgivable blunders in what is a very unforgiving game. Its bearing off technique is very poor – on occasions it left blots vulnerable to a hit for no apparent reason. Its doubling strategy is also strangely inconsistent – too keen to offer doubles, yet too cowardly to accept. On the plus side the user interface is very smooth; you click the icon onto the piece you wish to move and 'lift' it to its destination. The 'board', on a colour monitor at least, was very clear and a pleasure to do business on.

The most useful option is the action replay which will take you back, move by move, through the game you've just played. The results of all games played are saved to memory and can be recalled: interesting, but essentially useless as you are not able to replay any of these games. The most serious omission is the lack of a tournament play option. Ironic, because



this is where a properly programmed computer is far better equipped to handle all the permutations than any human (the aforementioned match was played using conventional doubling rules). In backgammon tournaments you double (and accept) according to the score, not, as in money games, purely on the position across the board. For this reason, a good tournament program would be a vital teaching aid, as well as giving the games an extra *frisson*. Yet to my knowledge one has yet to be devised. Another asset would have been a pip counter enabling the player to see exactly where he stood in a race; again an area where the computer is equipped to excel.

### STAKE AND CHIPS

To sum up; the program does not even reach intermediate level. Perhaps it might offer something if you learned the game over a plate of *souvlaki* and chips on a Greek island and wish to advance your understanding somewhat. However, a little knowledge can be an expensive thing. I would therefore not recommend playing for money on the strength of the lessons offered here. If you feel you must, though, please give me a call.

Perhaps the only way to ensure a quality backgammon program is to connect up via modem link to your own, and (in this case) Atari's bank account. A stake is predetermined and the results of each game are fed down the line. The respective bank accounts are debited and credited accordingly. Sit back and then marvel at the fastest advance in product development since the birth of the chip.

Brian Walker

Graphics: \*\*

Game Play: \*\*

Available for the ST only.

In 1977 a German professor designed a backgammon computer program which he was convinced was invincible. To his credit, he put his money where his philosophy was and challenged the then world champion Luigi Villa to a match, with £5000 to go to the winner. Luigi, to his credit, accepted the challenge. A venue was duly arranged and around 2000 people turned up. By this time the prof had built a robot to move the pieces around the board. Unfortunately the machine botched its entrance when it became entangled in some curtains, fell over, and was unable to take any further part in the proceedings. One-nil to the human race. In the match itself, the computer won 13-7. The experts agreed that Luigi had played perfectly, while the machine had made several errors. The computer had simply been lucky.

### DOUBLE TROUBLE

Since that time, perhaps inspired by the prof's success, several backgammon computers have appeared on the market. Many is the time I wish they'd paid out money, as nearly all were useless save perhaps for whiling away the time on a plane journey.

This is the first program I've tried so I was interested to see if it could emulate the achievement of its German predecessor. To give the machine a fair chance, I chose to play it on level 10; the 'highest skill level'. The very first move of the match made me consider consulting the Trades Description Act, as the computer made the two point when it rolled a 6-4. Even more mysteriously, its own manual states (correctly) that the 'recommended' move for this roll is to run one of your back men to the eleven point. Nevertheless, the machine proceeded to make a number of respectable moves and built up a 4-1 lead when it rolled a double six to enter two



# CURSE OF THE AZURE BONDS

DESIGNED BY  
JEFF GRUBB AND GEORGE  
MACDONALD

PUBLISHED BY  
SSI (WITH TSR)

PRICE £24.95

Game Play: \*\*\*\*

Graphics: \*\*\*\*

Available for the IBM PC and Commodore 64/128. Reviewed on the PC.

**Curse of the Azure Bonds** is the second game in the series *Forgotten Realms*, an **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons** game in computer form. The scenario plot is based on the novel *Azure Bonds*, and involves your characters in a quest to remove five azure bonds which have been magically placed upon them, by five evil factions who, in various ways, wish to dominate the land.

The plot is good enough, although not that original for games of this kind. What is original is presentation and game play. **Curse of the Azure Bonds** is a role-playing computer game in one of the purist forms I have yet encountered. Having sampled almost all the available computer products in the genre I found **Curse** to be, surprisingly, one of the best I have tried (and one of the very few I've had the energy to play to the bitter end!). I say surprisingly for two reasons because

the first in this series, **Pool of Radiance** is thoroughly rooted in that absurdist, though obsessive, rolegame, **Dungeons & Dragons**.

**Pool of Radiance** suffered from what many computer rolegames suffer from: bad plot and game *structure*, plus a game system that interfered with, rather than improved, play. **Curse**, however, is well thought out, with varied encounters and structured just about right to maintain excitement and interest.

The game essentially consists of five mini-scenarios where you are trying to remove the bonds and destroy the factions that placed them. However, the order in which they were introduced is not completely rigid and I didn't feel as if I was just following a predetermined series of encounters, as is so often the case in most games of this type.

Underworlds – or should I say 'dungeons' – are just about the right size to minimise mapping, and there is none of the extremely tedious and dull mapping puzzles that you find in games like the **Bard's Tale**.

## PERFECT REPRODUCTION

The AD&D game has been reproduced almost perfectly in the *Forgotten Realms* series, including character classes, levels, spells and their effects, combat rules, magic items and so on – a remarkable achievement in itself. I find AD&D doesn't work very well as a role-playing game when characters are at low levels – about one to five. It works best at about levels five to ten. Unfortunately, **Pool of Radiance** was set for levels one to five. Fortunately, **Curse of the Azure Bonds** is set for character levels five to ten. You

can either transfer your characters from **Pool of Radiance**, create new ones at fifth level, or take a pre-rolled team. Character generation is identical to AD&D and there is a facility to modify characters to reproduce those you may already have in an existing campaign (and thereby give all your characters maximum stats if you so wish!). You can have up to six in your party with an additional two slots for non-player characters that may join you later.

The game comes with a rule book and a journal full of background information (which you must read to have any idea about what is going on) and a lot of numbered entries which you are told to read at various points in the game. This innovative (at least in computer rolegames) approach allows the game designers to introduce more plot development than is usual, making the game richer and more like a role-playing scenario than a series of computer moderated combats. Graphics, if you have EGA or higher, are very nice, with pictures accompanying every encounter – almost perfect representations of the illustrations in the relevant D&D book (the hand of TSR at work, no doubt).

Combat is of the individual icon per character or monster variety (as in **Shard of Spring** and **Wizard's Crown**) where each character can move, cast spells, use items, attack and so on, in order (usually random, but based on dexterity). Each icon representing your character can be created by you at any time from a large range of mages, warriors and priests, holding weapons and the like, and even the colour of their clothes can be changed. game management for the player is complex but inevitably so given its AD&D nature, which suffers from a lot of silly little rules (like clerics not using edged weapons, alignments and so on). Despite this SSI have used their considerable experience in this sort of game to make it as almost perfect and user-friendly as it could be. If you are an AD&D fan this is as close as you are going to get to playing AD&D on a computer. If you hate AD&D and the *Forgotten Realms* books think about buying this *very* carefully. If you're into computer rolegames **Curse of the Azure Bonds** is worth it. It's got just about the right mix of combat and puzzle, without any of the over-the-top problem solving you can find in some games, although some combat encounters do take too long. Certainly, I enjoyed it enormously and look forward to the next in the series.

Jamie Thomson





# RED LIGHTNING

DESIGNED BY  
NORM KOGER JR

PUBLISHED BY  
SSI

PRICE £24.95

Graphics: \*\*\*\*

Game Play: \*\*\*\*

Available for the IBM PC.

**Red Lightning** is one of the latest offerings from SSI in their range of strategic wargames and is also their most sophisticated to date. It offers the player a chance to take the role of Commander in Chief of either the Warsaw Pact or NATO forces in a Third World War confrontation across Central Europe.

The game play uses the same format as most of the board games of this type, with a 25km hex map, a variety of terrains to modify movement and combat and units represented as counters. This all helps to give the game a nice familiar feel. However, on top of this the designers have added a level of complexity by including such things as weather to affect aircraft efficiency, sub-unit breakdown and variable sub-unit readiness. They have even given unit equipment lists, although this is of little use in the game.

## PUSHOVER

The game is fairly simple to set up initially, as you are offered a screen of options. You can choose which side to play, solo or two player game, the season the campaign begins in, scenario, length of scenario, competence of Pact troops and other minor options such as control of the airforce, North Atlantic and Special Ops and whether Pact forces may use chemical weapons. The designers recommend a simple start leaving many of the options to computer control until you have the hang of basic ordering of your troops. I would strongly advise this. As I chose a complicated initial set-up in my complacency and ended up by being soundly thrashed by a pushover rated Pact opponent.

The game is menu driven, which can be a little tedious as it takes many keystrokes to move you from one part to the next. The Atari version uses a mouse which would probably speed play up a lot. To

manoeuvre your ground forces you must move to the Full Hex Report where you can adjust the readiness of the sub-units. They can be put in either rest, reserve or forward state, which effects both the unit's command strength and its resupply ability. Controlling this area well is important, and takes a lot of practice. If you wish to do well, experiment with readiness. Having prepared your forces you may now move them. This requires a change in menu. You have two options here, travel mode where you move up to the 'front' or away from it, and manoeuvre mode which you use to attack the enemy or support your own forces. A slight vagary in the play occurs in movement – the inability of units of different nationalities to pass through or occupy the same hex. This leads to hassles in organising co-ordinated attacks or defence, mainly because the forces are all represented by counters of the same colour, and requires continual rechecking to find out where forces are. This could be intentional to simulate the confusion of war: if so it certainly works.

## SUPPLY NETS

Having moved all your troops and performed any attacks the computer will then calculate the results, giving you a blow by blow picture. Losses are represented by percentages. Troops will then either retreat or be removed from play or stand if damage is only slight. Each turn represents 12 hours so losses do seem to be high. It is even possible to wipe yourself out during an attack which presumably represents a counter attack. The computer then calculates supply nets

and adjusts the combat strength of the units proportionately.

Victory is determined by relative morale of each side. Whenever a unit is destroyed or a city captured, that nation's morale will fall. Should it reach zero then the remaining forces of the country will be removed from the theatre of operations. It therefore becomes imperative to withdraw damaged units from combat to allow recovery.

Other options within the game include air operations, which initially is best left to the computer while you learn about the ground forces. The air operations screen is nicely produced giving a picture of the aircraft and also its combat strengths. You must then assign planes to different tasks, which include air superiority, close air support, strike and recon. Within the strike option is the choice of airfield suppression, rear area harassment and direct attack on ground forces. Unfortunately you have no choice over where the forces are you hit, so cannot relieve pressure on units facing massed attack. It is hard to determine how much the airforces affect general combat, but it is imperative not to overuse them as readiness levels drop rapidly.

In addition to this there are options for airborne, amphibious and special operations. These seemed to have little effect on games that I played, but that may be due to ineptitude. But I do suspect they are added mainly for a little extra colour.





In summary I would say that this is a very well produced game. The manual is comprehensive and gives easy to understand instructions on how to play. It also includes nice descriptions of combat strength of equipment being used and also the algorithms used to formulate the various modifiers and combat.

There is also a useful reference chart for unit icons and terrain effects for movement and combat. It has a map of the play area on the back which is also necessary to locate POMCUS reinforcement hexes easily (which will need defending if the enemy breaks through).

Moving around the play area takes getting used to but this comes with practice. The balance of the game is good and there are a number of ways to adjust it in order to customise it for your own ability. The designers give plenty of advice on game play but leave a lot for you to find out for yourself. This helps to keep the game fresh as you are continually learning. I would therefore recommend it to traditional wargamers, but bear in mind that a short game may take up 20 hours, so don't go rushing turns or you will be soundly beaten.

John Inglis

## OIL IMPERIUM

DESIGNED BY

PUBLISHED BY  
RELINE SOFTWARE

PRICE £24.95

Game Play: \*\*

Graphics: \*\*\*

Reviewed on an Atari ST.

As it was of German origin I had high hopes for **Oil Imperium** as their board games rightly have a formidable reputation within the gaming hobby. Unfortunately this does not seem to apply to their software games.

**Oil Imperium** is a four player game. You move easily through the opening screens choosing the number of players (human) you want, the companies you want to play, the offices you would like and the victory conditions for the game. However, once you start the first month of actions, things get a little more difficult. Around the view of your office are various boxes which allow

you certain actions. A calendar on your desk indicates progress through the month. All actions take time thus limiting your moves per turn although there is no initial indication of how long such actions take. You are allowed to buy oilfields in eight regions of the world. It suggests you take out a feasibility study on any oilfield you wish to buy. I finally located what I think is the right screen for this, mis-titled 'Expertise', at my fifth attempt to play the game.

Having bought your oilfield and drilling concession you can then drill your well. As you start with a set amount of cash, and with oilfields, concessions and the like not coming cheap by the time you want to drill

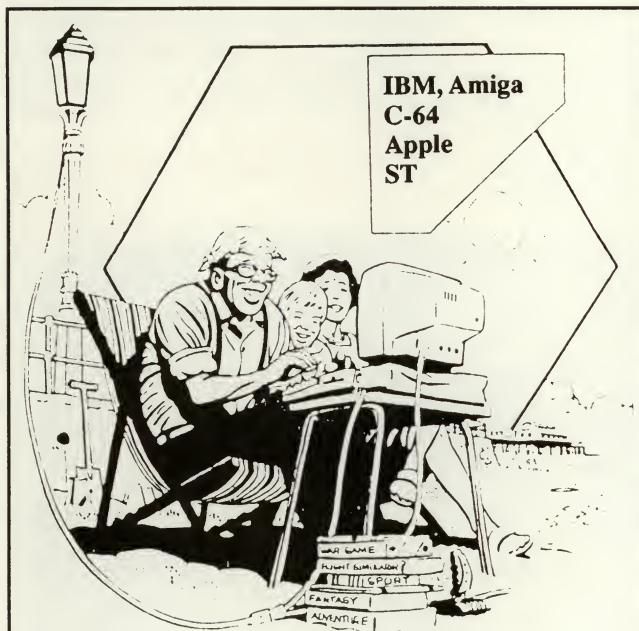
you usually don't have the readies to hire a specialised team. You do it yourself, which is much cheaper but requires a certain degree of arcade skill with the joystick. Thus a strategy game lasting possibly many hours hinges crucially in the first few turns on your ability to use the joystick for ten to twenty seconds. If you break your drill by failing to maintain a straight bore, you're scuppered.

Once into the game you can lay pipelines, buy storage tanks and sabotage the opposition. This all comes through using different screen options all of which appear cumbersome and time consuming to load. There is much grinding of the disk drive and switching of disks. The computer-played companies appear to make investments and take actions I can't even locate, and many attempts at actions end with unqualified messages. When drilling you can choose between yourself and a specialist team, but if the team costs too much you must drill yourself: there is no back out option to await more funds. The game requires much switching between screens but I don't see any payoff in smarter graphics or easier playing.

Against the likes of **Populous** and **Millennium 2.2** it appears this German software is five to seven years behind 'ours' in screen handling, graphics, user friendliness and general game layout and playability. The manual is frequently baffling, and I am both a gamer and a computer programmer. Four friends, all computer-literate gamers, found **Oil Imperium** equally baffling with a similar lack of success in progressing the game. When four play, a lot of wall studying and kitchen hopping is involved while the other players secretly take their turns.

Nothing irritates me more playing a game than to read a manual which constantly refers to a previous step it has not adequately explained, if at all. I look at all the other games I have and think where I got to with them by my fifth attempt and really wonder if this game is worth the effort. So, the question is: have the turkeys arrived in the shops early this Christmas? Possibly, but even after my bad experiences I hesitate to brand **Oil Imperium** as such. There may be a good game in here trying to get out. However, I suggest you be prepared for a long dig to unearth it. It has the potential to be a good game, but after five fruitless attempts to get anything going at all they've used up all my goodwill and patience. At the very best this is strictly for those who really like these kind of games and are prepared for the hard work involved.

Kevin Warne



### WAR GAMES, ADVENTURE GAMES SIMULATORS & SPORTS

Strategic Plus Software  
Dept GI  
PO Box 8, Hampton, Middx TW12 3XA  
Telephone 01-941 6163

STRATEGIC  
PLUS  
SOFTWARE

Send £2.50 for extensive catalogue.  
Prop S Harper.



## GENERIC WARGAMES

# THAT NOBLE GAME

---

### Games Reviewed:

#### WARGAME CONSTRUCTION SET

SSI, 1- or 2-player

#### UNIVERSAL MILITARY SIMULATOR

Firebird, 1- or 2-player

#### BORODINO

Atari, 1-player

#### ANCIENT BATTLES

CCS, 1- or 2-player

#### THE ANCIENT ART OF WAR

Brøderbund, 1-player

---

*Dave Morris compares five assorted games in search of the perfect generic computer wargame. We may have the technology, but do we yet have sufficiently talented and knowledgeable designers?*

Slowly but surely, the roster of computer games that simulate tactical battles is building up. Certainly this is an area of gaming where computers could really be useful. As a GI review pointed out a while back, accurate rules for battles can be a real pain to use. Simulationist complexity slows down what should be a scaled wargame to less than real-time, and constant fiddling around with morale factors and formation status and whatnot distracts players from getting the big picture. As long as your main interest in wargaming isn't painting up the toy soldiers, computers are the obvious answer.

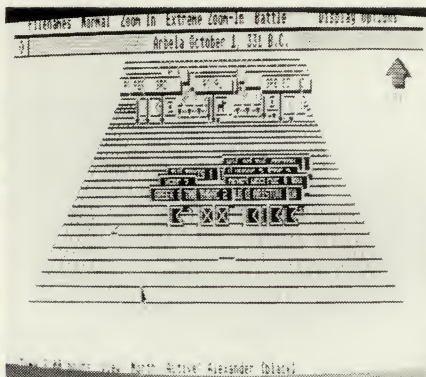
So let's look at some of the products on offer. First is SSI's **Wargames Construction Set**. This purports to deal with warfare on three possible scales: tactical, operational and strategic. In theory you can plan battles for any historical period, but that inclusion of the very 20th Century op-level view gives the game away. In fact, the visibility rules (units are unseen until first encountered, regardless of the scale used) and even the sound effects (knights and archers advance to the fray with a chugging tank-track noise) show that this is really a game of modern warfare. Firepower takes precedence, with

units becoming pinned or suppressed if they so much as twitch within range of an enemy capable of ranged attacks, and the movement costs assigned to terrain such as woods and buildings imply the involvement of armour and artillery. So for Ancient-world battles it is effectively useless – though you do get a nice scrolling map which you can customise right down to the colours. I ought to mention a couple of problems I had with the (ST) version I tried. Firstly, units are supposed to be able to fire on two out of four possible phases each turn; but in fact the computer wasn't bothering to keep tabs, so you could get four shots *and* unlimited opportunity fire. Careless. Also, the Assault assigned to units turned out to work the opposite way to what the rules tell you: an Assault of 0 is the toughest. Not that this matters much, since Assault only ranges from 0 to 14, with each point making just a 1% difference to the unit's chance of successful assault.

Firebird's **Universal Military Simulator**, as you can tell from the title, sells itself on the same extravagant boast that you can use it to recreate any battle from history. Sheer hubris: it is no more accurate than **WCS**, despite the academical trimmings that superficially lend it weight. You design your battlefield on a spartan black-&-white grid which you can then overlook from various points while the battle is in progress. This gives it a 3-D effect that **WCS** lacks, though I'm dubious whether this means elevation is really treated in fine detail when the combat equations are worked out. A nice feature is that you can give general commands to the armies – 'Attack on right flank' or whatever – rather than moving each individual unit. Unfortunately **UMS** makes no distinction between a unit's ranged and close combat strength, so again it is useless for pre-20th Century battles.

**Borodino** escapes such criticisms by restricting itself to the one eponymous battle, wisely avoiding the trap of trying to do too much in one package. You are Napoleon (sounds like a gamebook, doesn't it?) and you send orders out to your commanders which are then filtered down through the command structure. It is colourful, and at least feels like a real battle – like when you have to watch helplessly as Ney makes a hash of things over a mile away. Reports come back to you every fifteen-minute turn, and this really makes the game a lot more enjoyable, because you get to find out why things are happening the way they are instead of (as

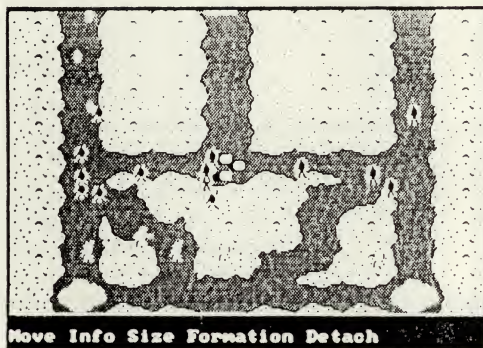




Universal Military Simulator

in many computer-moderated games) just sitting back as a nonplussed spectator. Apparently future releases are planned using the same system (*Waterloo* was reviewed last issue), including an Armada sea-battle. Maybe I'm prejudiced, though, but I can't help feeling that Atari should have chosen a less ambitious topic to start with. War doesn't seem to have been much fun by Napoleon's time, all logistics and delegation. Pharsalus, for instance, is an equally famous battle that would have given the player more of a hands-on experience of command. One gripe about the game itself: I couldn't get the reserve artillery to take orders directly from me even though I moved right up next to them. Obviously I don't have quite the same charisma as ol' Bony himself!

Moving on, we come to CCS's **Ancient Battles**. This is pretty much a straight set of tabletop rules transferred to computer. You can choose a battle (five are provided, including Pharsalus), pick an army, decide factors like visibility and deployment – then get stuck in. Designing an army from scratch is not possible, though. In play, you scroll around a map (the lack of sidebars makes it easy to get lost) giving orders to units. You only have a limited number of orders to give each turn, based on the commanders involved. Fortunately, in contrast to others like **WCS**, **Ancient Battles** avoids the awful tedium of moving units one at a time by providing a 'follow' command, which du-

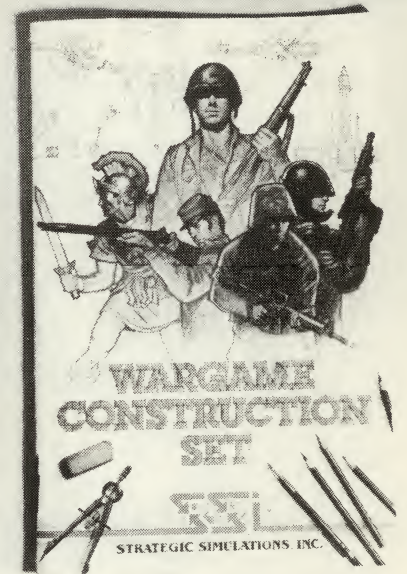


The Ancient Art of War

plicates the orders given to the last unit. So you get a whole line to advance by moving the first unit, then giving the others commands to follow. It is difficult to comment on the authenticity of the combat procedure because, as in so many computer games, the rule book lists the factors that are taken into account, but not the actual equation used. The usual defence of this practice is that it is all part of the 'fog of war'. Personally, I suspect that the real reason is that it insulates the game designer from any possibility of criticism. But **Ancient Battles**' designer, R T Smith, enjoys a solid reputation in the field, so I'll give him the benefit of the doubt.

**The Ancient Art of War** isn't really a battle simulation at all – but it is a good game, and it deals with the kind of period I'm looking at, so it deserves a mention. A large map shows the deployment of various squads, each of which can consist of up to fourteen men in any combination of archers, barbarians and knights. You move a squad by selecting it and then tracing the marker along the path you want it to take. It then proceeds as ordered while you turn your attention to other events. The time scale can be set from slow to very fast, depending on how nerve-wracking you like your wars to be. When squads encounter an enemy there is the option to zoom in, which gives a side view of the engagement. The individual men can then be ordered to attack, charge, stand their ground, or back off. Though hardly a picture of vivid realism, this part of the game can be quite exciting, and victory hinges on the way you use the troop types available. **Art of War** is for one player only, with computer-supplied opponents including Caesar and Napoleon. Some of the opponents behave rather stupidly (Genghis Khan is in general the toughest) and most subscribe to Sun Tzu's dictum that it is better to take the enemy's capital than to destroy his armies in the field. Terrain, supply, fatigue and recruitment are all handled with quite elegant simplicity, making this a game worth coming back to.

I looked at most of these games in the hope of finding a system with which I could model Ancient-world battles of my own. Most have strengths; some have superfluous features; all have weaknesses. Having thought a bit about this over the years, I will try to describe my ideal game. Despite the visual appeal of 3D views, a straight overhead plan is quite adequate as long as elevation and terrain are clearly marked. The ideal representation would be for troops to appear on the screen as col-



lections of dots – thickly clustered in the case of regular infantry, loosely patterned for skirmishers or disorganised units. Forces could then be seen to break up into a scatter of men as they were routed. Failing this, it ought to be enough simply to show the various units involved as blocks just as they would appear in a book about tactics; distinguishing individual 'counters' on the screen is just a carry-over from board wargames. Fiddling with counters is no easier using a mouse than it is with beer-sticky fingers, and user-friendly orders like 'retain formation relative to previous unit' would help a lot. Designers should think clearly about what distinct basic factors are needed to describe a unit – its melee value, missile value, number of men, etc – because in many of the games I've looked at these have been muddled up with derived factors (**UMS** and **WCS** being the worst offenders). Battle equations should be supplied if the player is to have any confidence in the game, and after an engagement it should be possible to view the equation and see why you got the result you did (**UMS** scores highly on this point). External factors – the effect of rough ground on organised troops, for instance – should be not be implicit in the rules, as the players might have good reason for wanting to vary them. Finally, the game has to have a sensible way of assessing the result, if only by presenting a list of casualties and letting the players decide it for themselves. A friend of mine finished *Waterloo* in a state of clear superiority over Napoleon's forces only to be told by the computer that he had in fact suffered a crushing defeat. Well, as Sun Tzu said, 'War is based on deception.' Or maybe McAuliffe's remark is more appropriate: 'Nuts!' GI



## LETTERS

**What shop**

Can I offer my congratulations to all the staff for their work towards the quality and content of the *Games International* magazine.

May I make a request for the inclusion of one item within your pages. That item is a directory, by region, of games stores from which the reviewed games can be purchased. You currently only have addresses for those retailers who are willing to place an advertisement in each issue and while I can understand you not wanting to give free advertisements to retailers, I'm sure many of your readers may find it useful if they had a list of stores where they could attempt to get games from.

My request has come about as a result of my searches for Avalon Hill's game **Speed Circuit**, which the local retailers in Southampton and Portsmouth don't currently have in stock. The magazine has provided the addresses of some alternative outlets: Esdevium Games, Gamers in Exile, Spirit Games etc, but none within easy travelling distance of my home address.

**Kevin Playford**

Fareham, Hampshire PO15 6EX

*A good idea, therefore unlikely to appeal to most retailers (the innocent will know their names).*

**Company check**

I would like to suggest that you do a review each month on a games company, and not just their games. You could tell us a bit of their history, their product range, etc, and get them to put a few of their ads in.

**D A King**

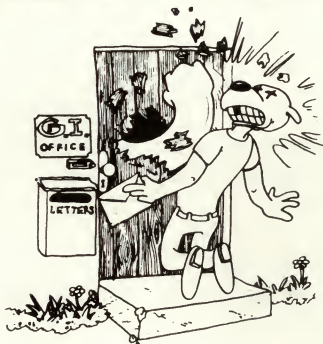
Rainham, Essex RM13 9SR

*Time permitting, we'll try.*

**Art attack**

I have heard quite a few definitions of art, but none so bizarre as your idea that its function is to objectify reality. Curiously, though, this definition supports Robert Abbott's contention that games can be an art form. Simulationist games of the *S&T* variety are able to provide the participants with an objective view of events that they might otherwise only view from a politically biased slant. These games

## REBOUND



Write to: *Games International*, Lamerton House, 23a High Street, Ealing, London W5 5DF

can be enlightening and rewarding (it's their misfortune to share the term 'game' with trivialising products) and I think they have a duty, as well as a right, to tackle delicate subjects. Curiosity rather than competitiveness is often the motivating force for playing them. Now, I wouldn't call them art on that basis, mind you – but it's a free country.

**Dave Morris**

New Otani Hotel, Tokyo

*Maybe we should go on Channel 4 together?*

**Tact and diplomacy**

I find myself alarmed and concerned with a couple of articles written by the editor in your August issue (#8) as being counter-productive to your (our?) cause.

I begin with *Upfront*, where you lampoon the British advertisers. If in fact you require advertising, your tone (of sarcasm?) is it going to encourage advertisers? I am worried by 'bleating' about problems. Surely readers want to identify with a positive, go ahead, confident magazine and editor. Otherwise, I for one start to 'worry' or feel nervous about continuing subscription.

Then onto *Space Hulk* (page 9) where GDW (*sic*) come under heavy fire for their game. Footnote adds to the embarrassment. I feel embarrassed for the manufacturer and potential advertiser. Imagine the article being discussed in the GDW offices. That's really going to encourage them to advertise?

Otherwise, screw the advertisers, and lets get the hatchet out for real. But then, do not bleat about their revenue. Let's be honest about being an independent review-based magazine and let the reader in on the strategy of the magazine and let the reader decide about the cover price. We'll either stump up or cancel, one way or another. But once the price goes up, there is presumably no coming down.

And so on to *Origins '89* report, page 14. Why the criticism of *West End Games*, just because a dealer wears a suit. This does not seem relevant to the review? What's wrong with a suit. I wear one sometimes. Do you? What's wrong with presenting oneself to best clothes? It shows some respect for the customers surely.

And *Desert Steel*. Yes, there is a need for another game on desert warfare. This one is tactical offering. The other games may be operational, or have a different movement system, area to area instead of hex to hex. But anyway, it is up to the reader to decide, not for you. You just describe the game to us and allow me to draw my own conclusion thank you. I am a big boy now, I can decide how to spend or not to spend my money, if you give me enough information to consider the purchasing decision, myself.

Without purchasers, your advertisers will not think much of your readership. Are you appealing to people *not* to buy?

I happen to like *Desert Steel*, I have bought a copy. To go with yes, the other desert warfare games on the subject, variety being the spice of life etc.

I just feel that you could be more tactful and even humorous about the comments you have and the strength of feeling you have without being so 'knocking' in your copy. Just lay the bones bare, and leave it at that, but let's have some enthusiasm about games, please. Enthusiasm is infectious. It stirs people's imagination, gets readers motivated, let's go out there and *buy* the games, not just read about them! But you're our leader, our front man. Don't depress me.

**David Packe**

Highnam, Gloucestershire GL2 8NF

*Don't follow leaders.*

**Monopoly**

I am essentially a rolegamer with a moderate interest in games overall. My interest spans several years but has waned recently (*Games Workshop* has monop-



lised sales in Newcastle). When I read your magazine for the first time, I felt that interest rekindled.

I'd like to commend you on a few points: the confidence and seriousness of the articles, the restricted advertising, and the generous price.

**J P Lisle**

Dunston, Tyne & Wear NE11 9UE

### Peas in a pod

I have a suggestion for a few articles for when new games are thin on the ground and therefore not many to review.

As your advertisers are trying to sell old, but still available games, as well as new ones. How about a few comparisons of the various versions of certain games that are available . . . **Civilization**, **Diplomacy**, **Kingmaker** etc are all sold in more than one published version. Or games that at first sight are very similar, for example a comparison between **Shogun** and **Samurai**.

Finally I'd like to see in your reviews some comment on the best number of players a game is suitable for. Buying a game advertised as 'for 2 to 6 players' only to find anything less than four is pointless can be very annoying.

**Bob Walker**

Skipton, Yorks BD23 2ED

### Que?

With this letter we have the enjoyment to put in your knowledge the next opening in Barcelona (Spain) of the Center of Initiatives and resources for the game, **Casa del Mig**, place in the background of Parc de l'Espanya Industrial.

**Casa del Mig** is a public equipment, product of the Ajuntament de Barcelona's initiative and the work developed by the Association Ludocentre. **Casa del Mig's** function will be to act how Center of documentation and information about the ludic phenomenon – understanding as such the world of game and toy. Our Center is directed to as particulars as professionals and institutions. Equally we'll act as Center of coordination and impulse for news initiatives into ludic ambit, contributing to it with out resources, methods and installations.

Among our installations, we have a collection of specialize magazine magazines as nationals as foreigners in which we would like to have the interesting magazine that you leading. Because our public

nature without lucrative spirit and the wide variety of cultural and ludic activities that we must to pay attention to, we must rationalize our budget. In this sense, we request your amiable and disinterested collaboration with us, with the contribution of a full collection of your magazine with the corresponding indexes, as well as a subscription for futures numbers.

For your help we would put the name of your magazine in the **Casa del Mig's** list of collaborators.

To feed the data base of our informatic information center we would like that you remit us filling the questionnaire that we enclose you. Any additional data that you think useful for us about your magazine, we'll receive it delighted.

We'll be grateful if you send us your answer as fast as you can. We wait your collaboration and we offer you our collaboration for all you can to wish.

**Carles Vivancos**

Director, Casa del Mig  
Barcelona, Spain

### Dawn of the Dead

Lately in *Games International* there have been some worrying changes: a) a large price increase and b) the introduction of too many computer games reviews. Have you realised that you are now following in the footsteps of the long deceased *Gamer* magazine?

For example, yesterday while standing in a local games shop I overheard a conversation between two potential subscribers of your magazine. One of them picked up a copy of *Games International* No. 9 and after flicking through the pages for a while he turned to his companion and said 'Oh, another *White Dwarf*.' I wonder if this is the impression you are trying for. Don't you think those pages could have been put to better use?

**D K Green**

Colchester, Essex CO2 7HW

*No. As to the two 'potential subscribers', I hope you gave their guide dogs a biscuit.*

### Satisfied of Sollngen

As a very satisfied reader of GI I would like to renew my subscription to your marvellous games zine for another 12 issues.

What I like best is the reasonable distribution of general games, role-playing games and wargames. Keep on publish-

ing in this manner and GI should remain one of Europe's most successful magazines in gaming.

**Konrad Dolata**

Sollngen, West Germany

### Freedom of the press

Brian Walker raised in GI 9 the question of editorial independence from advertising.

GI is in a unique position: its content appeals to an older readership than more widely available games publications such as *GM* and *White Dwarf*, and it isn't yet connected with a games company in the same way as *Games Review Monthly* or (again) *White Dwarf*. Its reviews therefore seem more independent to any gamer who wishes to find out the true worth of a game.

The current editorial stance is reassuring and will hopefully remain firm. But the influence of advertisers on editorial copy isn't the only side of the argument. The main battle with some readers is to get them to differentiate between product news and reviews. News is straight reporting of the availability and content of a product; reviews are these facts in more detail with an indication of worth.

GI has a useful role to play in providing comment that its readers and advertisers respect. After all, if an advertiser really does have a good game, what can it fear from a respected review of its product?

**Ian Marsh**

Putney SW15 3JX



## GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

GI welcomes your letters on any games related topic. Whether you feel we've been too generous or harsh on a game, have a neat idea to improve play, or simply want to rant about something, we'd like to hear from you.



# Free classifieds

## SMALL ADS

**EARLY GAMES** for sale (before board and components were boxed together): Waddingtons **Cluedo** (£10), Waddingtons **Buccaneer** 1958 (£8), Arle games **Wembley** (£7). Other old games: **Diplomacy** - Intellectual Diversions 1962 (£10), **Go For Broke** - Vic-Toy 1965 (£5), **Mine a Million Business Game** - Waddingtons 1970 (£5). Prices do not include package and postage. Paul Jefferies, 46 Towncourt Lane, Petts Wood, Kent BR5 1EH. ☎ 0689 34454.

**WANTED URGENTLY**, a copy of board game **Quest**; buy or possible exchange. Let me know your price or wants. Also, does anyone have MB's **Square Mile**? Denis Arnold, 19 Sunray Ave, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 9QG ☎ 0394 274145, evenings or weekends.

**WANTED URGENTLY**, a copy of board game **Kensington** to buy. Let me know your price. Rebecca Johnson, Japonica Cottage, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, Somerset TA2 6QS. ☎ 0823 286937 evenings and weekends.

**ATTENTION USA!** Wanted: **Starfall** (Yaquinto), willing to buy or exchange for any German game. Hans Reinhold, Wlesenkamp 12, 3045 Bispingen, West Germany.

**GERMAN GAMES COLLECTOR** wants to buy/exchange general and sport games. Dr K Rehders, Walldorfer Str 1, D6000 Frankfurt 70.

**LIVING THE ORCLIFE** - The Journal of the Spirit-World fantasy role-playing system. Full of facts, fancies and philosophy. Issue 1: Body, Spirit & Metaphysics. Issue 2: Money, Status & Taxes. Four issue sub £3.50 UK, £4.50 elsewhere. Sample copy £1 UK, £1.25 elsewhere. Send to: C E Nurse, 49 Station Road, Haxby, York YO3 8LU. £ sterling only, please.

**GO** - oriental boardgame. British Association, membership: Brian Timmins, The Hollies, Wollerton, Market Drayton, Salop TF9 3LY. ☎ 063084 292.

**POSTAL DIPLOMACY.** Interested? Send SAE to John, 92 Sandyhill Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 0JA.

**WANTED:** Games enthusiasts, Bournemouth area. Prefer strategy games but anything interesting considered. Possibility of forming club. Please contact John Johnstone, 18 Hood Crescent, Bournemouth BH10 4DD. ☎ 0202 518245.

**ANYONE INTERESTED** in starting a Sheffield games club, possibly to play every other week. Howard, ☎ 0742 462469

### SPIELBOX

Bi-monthly German language games review magazine. Send DM 54,- (plus DM 9,80 if you want it sent air mail) for a one year - six issue - subscription to: Huss-Verlag GmbH, Joseph-Dollinger-Bogen 5, Postfach 46 04 80, D-8000 München 46, West Germany.

**WANTED:** SERIOUS and SENSIBLE players or GMs aged 18+ to join player (25) and GM (22) for **Cthulhu** and other games in Milton Keynes area. We play any setting with **RQ2** or **Delta Force** rules systems. Most evenings are available. Write to Michael Thomas, 51 Appleyard Place, Oldbrook, Milton Keynes MK6 2PW, ☎ 0908 668 007.

**FOOTBALL PBM** Free start up and only 60p a turn. Cash prizes for winners of leagues and cups. 27 places left so write now to avoid disappointment. Send an SAE to 50 Gayton Road, Cleethorpes, S Humberside DN35 0HN.

**WANTED:** collector's edition **D&D**, Judges Guild **D&D/AD&D** adventure supplements, *Dragon* magazines numbers 17, 11, 16, 31, 89, 99, 128. Richard Brown, 299 Beverley Road, Hull, Humberside HU5 1LG

### DISTRIBUTORS

and retail stockists wanted in all countries except Britain and Germany, for **Railway Rivals** maps and other games: Rostherne Games (GI), 102 Priory Road, Milford Haven SA73 2ED, UK. ☎ 06462 2752

**BIRMINGHAM DM/Players** seek non-racist, non-sexist **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons** players in West Midlands. Age 16+. ☎ 021-551 1679

**WANTED:** SPI game **War Between The States** & PWG game **Black Sea Black Death**. Contact Dave Mylie ☎ 051-256 8461 evenings. Or write to 94 Parkside Drive, Liverpool 12.

### TRANSLATIONS NEEDED

Of the following games' rules for a forthcoming GI article: **Ordino Trail** (Hachette, French), **Kunterbunte Bimmelbahn** (Jumbo), **Auf Der Schwabischen** (Ravensburger), **Bummelbahn** (Ravensburger), **Fahr Zu Kleine Lok** (Ravensburger), **Fuzzi Heinz Und Schlendrian** (Spears) and **Strategie Auf Schlenen** (Spika, East German). Write to Alan R Moon, 15 Burnside Street, Lancaster, NH03584, USA.

**GAMES INVENTOR** requires contract with games company for unique board game. Adonal Games, 58 Clayton St, Colne, Lancs BB8 0HJ.

**FOR SALE** collection of 50 games. Many board war-games, some RPGs, general and sports games. Lots of rare and out of print titles. Send an SAE for a list to Andrew Parsons, 67 Haig Court, Bradford St, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 0BJ.

**OPPONENTS WANTED.** Looking for boardgamers, especially **Diplomacy**, in the Sheffield area. C M Read, 20 Carr Road, Sheffield S6 2WZ.

**CHAMPIONSHIP FOOTBALL** Play-by-Mail. Computer moderated postal football game. Features include: League, cups, transfers, internationals, detailed finances. Cost 50p a week, start-up cost £1. Send SAE to CFBM, 35 Tring Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 7LD.

**IS THERE** a games group on the Isle of Wight? Does anyone wish to form one? Jacob, ☎ 853517.

**WANTED:** Waddingtons **Air Charter**. Drew Shottliff, ☎ 0525 377949.

**WANTED DESPERATELY:** **Election** from Intellect Games, and other old games. Can help too. Rudolf Rühle, Burgweg 33, D5300 Bonn 1.

**FOR SALE:** *Games & Puzzles* 1-34, *Miniature Warfare* vols 14, *War Monthly* 150. Offers: D Wilson, 15 Chester Way, Boston, Lincs.

**COLLECTION** of over 50 games for sale - mostly board games; lots of rare titles. SAE for list to: Jim Crawford, 11 Canon Court, Nevendon, Basildon Essex.

**WANTED:** copies of **Mentalls**, **Pagoda**, **Thought-Wave**, **Wildlife Adventure**, **Trade** and **Infinity**.

Contact Paul Gabriner, Dr Koomansstraat 28, 1391 XB Abcoude, Holland.

**GAMES FOR SALE.** Splitting collection, wargames, fantasy games, collector's games, family games etc. Magazines: *Ares*, *White Dwarf*, *Strategy & Tactics*, *Phoenix*, *WWW*. Large SAE for list. R E Ruck, 47 Chichester Drive East, Saltdean, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 8AN. ☎ 0273 304329, 8pm-10pm.

**GAMES PLAYERS** wanted to form club, Stoke-on-Trent/South Cheshire Areas, ☎ 0782 720114.

**OLD GAMES** for sale: **Diplomacy**, 1962 Intellectual Diversions, and **Mine a Million Business Game**, 1965. Contact Paul, ☎ 0689 34454 for details.

## CONVENTION DIARY

### UK

**GAMESCON.** November 11, 1989 at the Laindon Community Centre, High Road, Laindon, Essex. Emphasis on games playing, including an AD&D TM competition. Contact Chris Baylis, 67 Mynchens, Lee Chapel North, Basildon, Essex SS15 5EG.

**WAR '89** November 11-12 at the Rivermead Leisure Centre, Richfield Ave, Reading. Includes the UK Masters **AD&D** Tournament, for what that's worth.

**WOTTACON** January 6, 1990 at Goldsmiths College, New Cross, London. A one day convention organised by the Guild of Melee and Magic. All aspects of role-playing covered, trade stands, competitions etc. Advance tickets £2.50 from The Guild of Melee and Magic, 127 Queen Adelaide Court, Penge, London SE20 7EB.

**CAMPAIGN 90.** May 12-13, 1990 at Waughton Campus, Milton Keynes. Contact Dean Bass, 14 Skeats Wharf, Pennyland, Milton Keynes MK15 8AY.

**CONJUNCTION.** July 27-29, July 1990 at New Hall College, Cambridge. Relaxed rolegame convention organised like an SF con rather than a selling exercise. Probably similar to the late, lamented KoanCon. Contact Conjunction, c/o 25 Wycliffe Road, Cambridge CB1 3JD.

**MINDGAMES 90** November 10 and 11, 1990 at the Novotel in Hammersmith. An international showcase for all types of gaming. Contact Simon Tittley/Bridget Seddon, Waltham Business Services, 105a Queen Street, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 1LR. ☎ 0628 770676.

### EUROPE

**SPIELFEST** November 11 and 12, 1989, at the Ullsteinhaus, Mariendorfer Damm, Berlin. Essen Games Fair with expanded interteam tournament, at the Gruganhalle, Essen from the October 19-22, 1989.

### NORTH AMERICA

**DIP-CON XXII.** America's biggest Diplomacy tournament. For further details contact Larry Peery, PO Box 8416. San Diego CA 92102 USA. ☎ 619 295 6248.



# £15 FOR A PACK OF 12



## ... BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY.

**24 hour VISA and Access/Mastercard subscription hot line: ☎ 01-579 2612**

Or complete the following form:

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....Post Code .....

Credit card # .....

Expires .....

UK £15

Europe £18

US & rest of world £22 (surface mail)

US & rest of world £35 (air mail)

Back issues also available: £2.50 (UK), £3 (Europe) £3.50 (rest of world)

Cheques, postal orders, International Money Orders in £ sterling, payable to:

**GAMES INTERNATIONAL**  
Lamerton House, 23a High St,  
Ealing, London W5 5DF.





# Put On Your Thinking Cap.

## The Ultimate World War III Battle Scenario Is Here.

Whether you're an aspiring five star general or you just enjoy a great strategy game, you'll love the action and realism of RED STORM RISING™ and THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER™ board games from TSR.

Based on the novels by best selling author Tom Clancy, RED STORM RISING and THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER games test your skills as a military strategist. You control the action. In the RED STORM RISING game, players command the land and air forces of the Warsaw Pact and NATO countries in the climactic struggle for control of Europe. In THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER game, players live the adventure of submarine and naval warfare searching for the elusive Soviet nuclear submarine. Both games can be played separately *or together* to create the ultimate World War III battle scenario. Each game features a full-color, tri-fold board with hundreds of military playing pieces, background and equipment notes and game scenarios. A basic set of rules makes start-up easy. And the advanced rules will challenge even the most avid strategy game player.

So man your battle stations and put on your thinking caps. RED STORM RISING™ and THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER™ games are now available at a toy, hobby or book store near you.



TSR Ltd, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB. Tel: (0223) 212517.

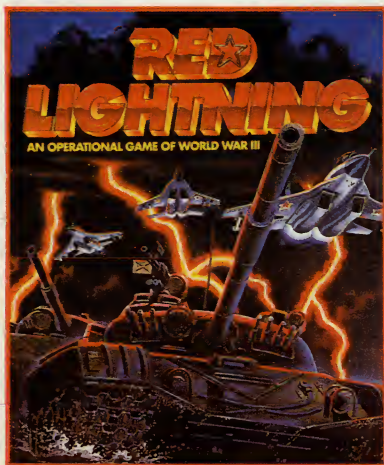
The TSR logo is a trademark owned by TSR, Inc.  
THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER © 1988 Naval Institute Press  
All Rights Reserved.  
© 1989 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

RED STORM RISING is a trademark owned by and used under license from Jack Ryan Enterprises, Ltd  
and Larry Bond. © 1988 Jack Ryan Enterprises, Ltd. and Larry Bond. All Rights Reserved.



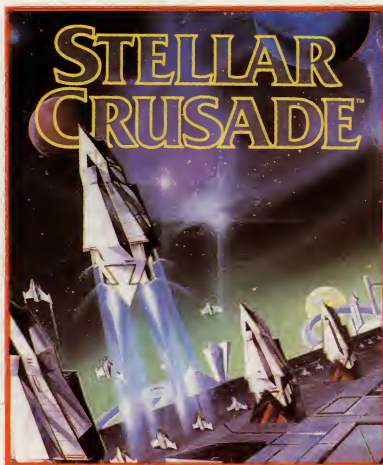


# SSI... A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF ACTION AND ADVENTURE



**RED LIGHTNING™** Face the fearsome power of the Soviet army in the war that as yet has only been talked about – the explosive collision between the forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Painstaking military research and strategic intelligence challenge the avid wargamer to explore the myriad of possible outcomes should World War III erupt.

**ATARI ST & IBM PC £29.99**  
**AMIGA £29.99**



**STELLAR CRUSADE™** Two fanatical groups embark on a mad race to control a small, but vital star cluster. It is an exciting strategy game of exploration, economic power and military conquest on an interstellar scale. As the leader of one faction your first task is to send out an exploration team to the best planets and colonize them.

**IBM PC £34.99**  
**ATARI ST & AMIGA £34.99**



**STAR COMMAND™** A multicharacter adventure where all your space born fantasies come alive. Create your select band of eight star troopers and hunt down the infamous Blackbeard and his band of intergalactic pirates only to find (should you survive) an entire alien, insectoid race poised to make a blood chilling invasion of your universe.

**ATARI ST & AMIGA £29.99**  
**IBM PC £34.99**

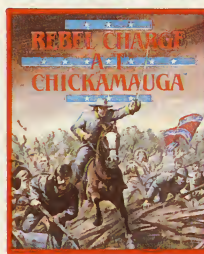
**DEMON'S WINTER™** The demon god Malifon has cast his Demon's Winter upon the land, in order that his minions – the Kobolds and goblins – may thrive in their task to free



him from incarceration. It is only the combined powers of your party of five – be they barbarian and thief, or wizard and scholar – that can uncover the spells to trap Malifon forever and undo his wintry curse.

**CBM 64/128 DISK £19.99**  
**IBM PC £24.99**  
**ATARI ST & AMIGA £24.99**

**REBEL CHARGE AT CHICKAMAUGA™** In August 1863 the Federal Army of the Cumberland under Major General William Rosecrans was sent eastward to march against



Chattanooga, and against General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. So it was that at dawn on September 19, both sides were poised around Chickamauga Creek, prepared to prove its Cherokee name prophetic – 'River of Death'.

**CBM 64/128 DISK £24.99**  
**IBM PC & AMIGA £29.99**

**QUESTRON II™** "The only way to destroy the Evil Book of Magic is to prevent it from ever being created!" And with these words from Mesron, the Great Wizard, you realize the



adventure you thought had ended in Questron has only just begun. As Mesron begins his mystical incantation, you feel a darkness enveloping you, the air crackling with an unearthly sound.

**ATARI ST/AMIGA £24.99**

There's a world full of opportunities with SSI – the dramas of the past, the mysteries of the future, gathered together to form an unrivalled collection of role playing fantasies and all action simulations that offer a new dimension in computer entertainment.

YOU'LL MAKE SOME UNUSUAL FRIENDS AS YOU EXPLORE OTHER TIMES, OTHER WORLDS



U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel: 021 623 3388



LATEST RELEASES